

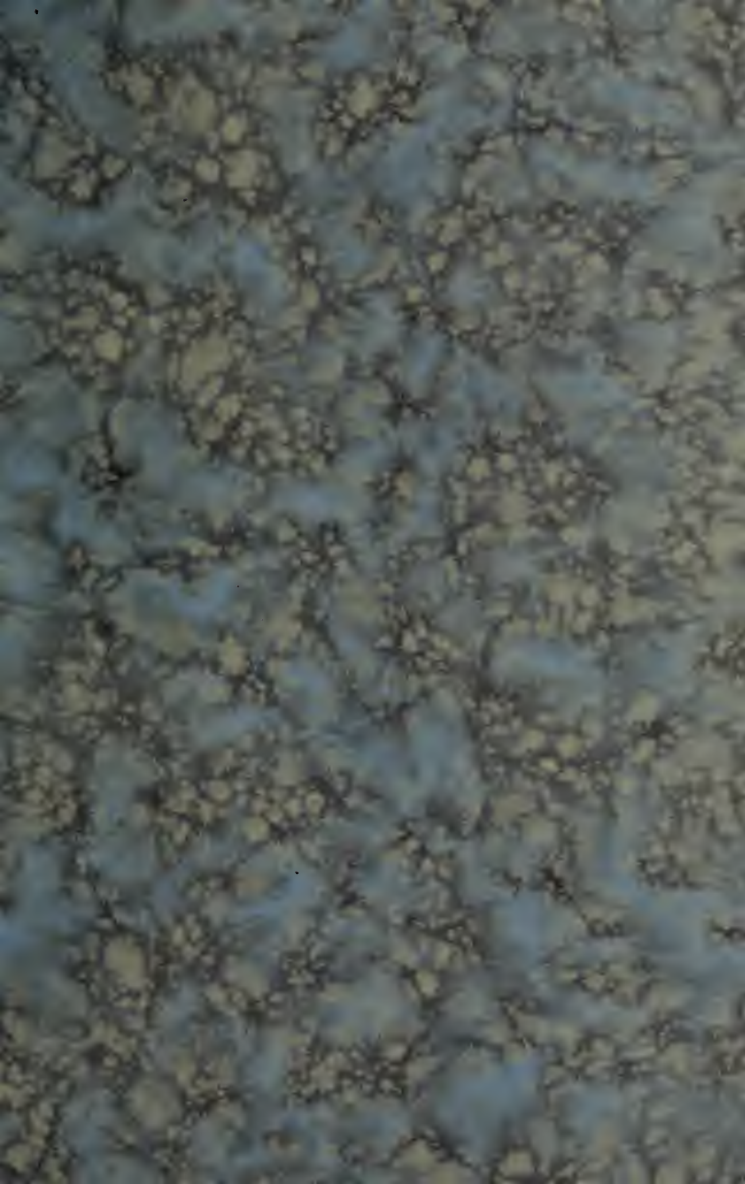


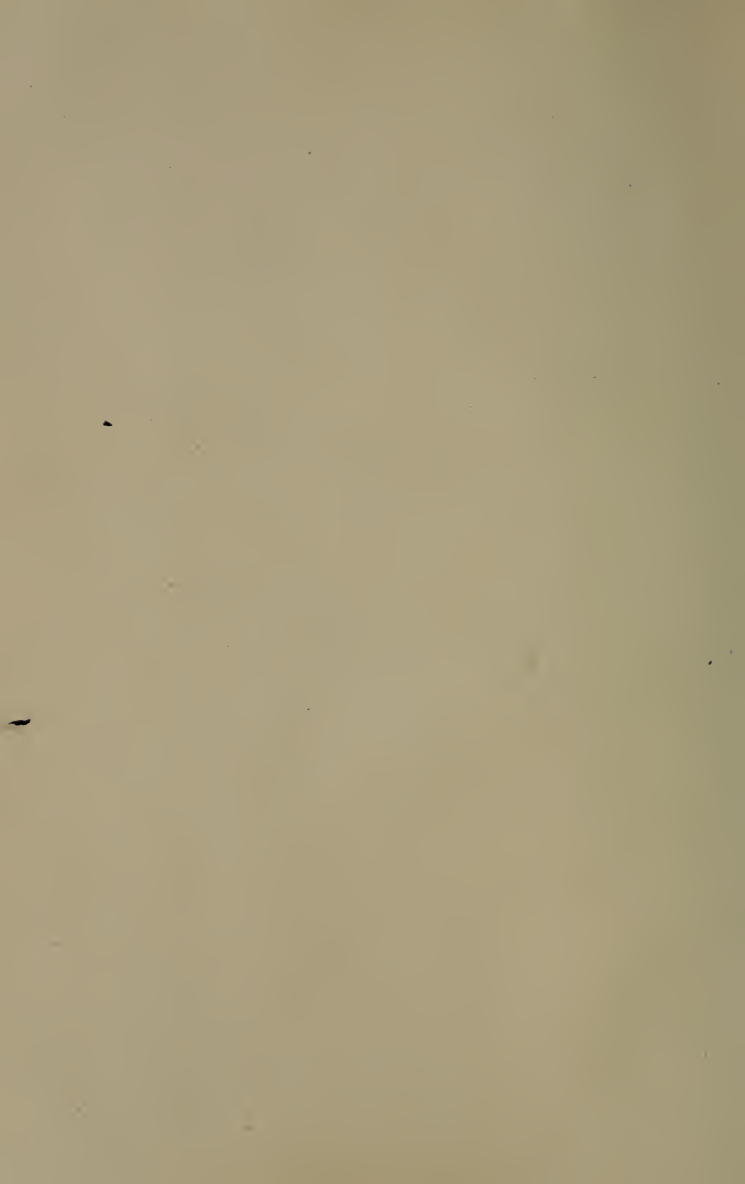
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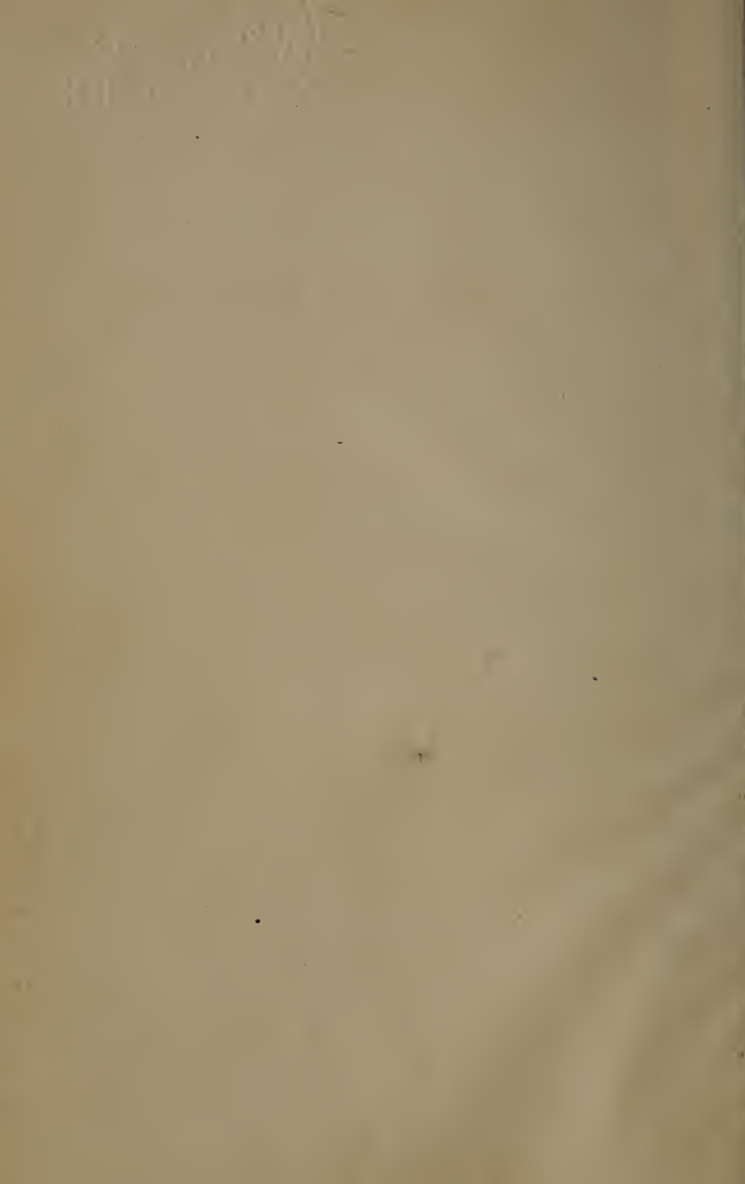
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AUTOBIOGRAPHY
OF AN
ENGLISH DETECTIVE

BY "WATERS"

IN TWO VOLUMES
VOL II



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Autobiography of an English Detective.

MR. CHARLES FRODSHAM.

In Two Chapters.

CHAPTER I.—GUILTY, OR NOT GUILTY.

IT is perhaps unnecessary to remark that in making these selections from rough leaves scribbled over with memoranda of a busy life, I have been governed—more or less unconsciously—by a desire to appear as well as possible before the public. I am far, however, from wishing to insinuate that I have not sometimes failed lamentably as a detective officer. Those failures have been frequent enough; but I do not like to parade them—choosing, in preference, to set out my successes. A pardonable weakness it seems to me.

I suppose all men have been hit, at least once

in their lives, by a shaft from Cupid's quiver. I know, of course, that an immensity of trash is spoken and written upon the eternal topic, and that the blind god's sharpest arrow is fatal only to extremely weak organizations. Still the pangs of despised love are for a time very difficult to bear. At all events, it was so in my case. And when quite five-and-twenty years had passed away, and I had ceased to think of Charlotte Gray—in my waking hours, at all events—an unexpected meeting proved that the impression she had made upon me was, I will not say vivid as ever, but indelible—like, to use a fanciful simile, the characters traced by some sympathetic inks, which, invisible in the light of common day, reappear under certain influences, bright, distinct as when first stamped upon the paper or parchment.

Six months, perhaps more than that, before this narrative opens, a human body, much mutilated, was found in a coppice situate between Winchester and Andover, Hants. The finders were two children—John Perkins and Charles Beach. The eldest, and there was not much difference in their

ages, might be about ten years old. The time was late autumn, and the boys were out nutting. The corpse—that of a young man—was much decomposed; and the face had been in some way, and by some means, smashed in, beyond the possibility of recognition. “By a club, or may be by a stone,” said a constable, who gave evidence before the coroner’s jury. The clothing found upon the corpse, though much soiled with blood and dirt, was of the finest quality. On the tail of the shirt the initial letters H. F. G. were worked in yellow silk. The inquest resulted in a verdict of wilful murder against some person or persons unknown.

The affair might not have caused much stir, had it not happened that Mr. Sidney Herbert (Lord Herbert—late Secretary of War), reading the report of the inquest in one of the county papers, fancied the corpse was that of one Henry Francis Gordon—a distant relative of his, and a rather wild youth—who had been, he knew, shooting in the locality. Application was made at Scotland-yard by the right honourable gentleman for the

aid of a detective, and I had the honour of being selected for the service. Had I delayed my journey a few hours only, I should not have gone at all—Mr. Sidney Herbert having ascertained, shortly after he wrote to Sir Richard Mayne, that his young relative had returned to Paris, where the family resided. One circumstance was mentioned in the letter from Mr. Henry Francis Gordon which, when made known to me, set my detective brain at work. The young gentleman had put up at the Antelope Inn, Salisbury, and he found that he must have left one of his shirts there—which, like the rest, was marked H. F. G., in yellow silk. There could be little, if any, doubt therefore that the shirt found upon the murdered man was his ; since although there might be persons whose initials were H. F. G., it was incredible that such person should have his shirts also marked with yellow silk—that being a material seldom or never used for such a purpose. This I was not informed of till some five or six days subsequently—Mr. Herbert not being at Pembroke Castle when I arrived there. He had left for London a few hours

previously, and we must have passed each other on the road.

Pembroke Castle is not more than two or three miles from Salisbury, where I took up my quarters at the Plume of Feathers. The next morning I went to see and question the boys who discovered the body. From the lad Perkins I could learn nothing in the slightest degree suggestive; but Charles Beach, an intelligent lad, told me he had several times seen two young gentlemen walking together near the place where the body was found. They were out shooting, and had dogs with them. Once he heard them at high words, quarrelling fiercely—about a young lady it seemed—and they parted in anger. Beach did not know either of the young men; and that he had seen them had passed from his mind till the previous market-day at Winchester, when (whilst he himself was standing by the Cross in that city) he saw one of them pass by on horseback, followed by two of the dogs which he (Beach) had seen with the young gentlemen whilst shooting. The boy fancied the rider noted him keenly, curiously; and the

memory came back that he had seen the horseman near the place where the dead body had been found, and heard him in fierce altercation with his companion.

“ You do not know the young gentleman’s name ? ”

The lad replied that he did not ; but that as the gentleman alighted at the George Hotel, there could be little doubt that he was known there. There was not much in this story, but it took hold of my mind. I would go to Winchester ; but first it would be as well to visit the spot where the murder appeared to have been committed. I did so. No signs of struggle were visible. There had been a long continuance of wet weather ; the ground was soft, and man had hustled there for life with one or more adversaries. The post-mortem examination established the fact that the deceased person had not been killed by bullet or knife. Might it be that the victim had lain down to rest, and had his skull smashed whilst asleep ? Not a very probable conjecture. The likelier one was, that the murder had been committed some

distance off, and the body afterwards brought to that spot by the assassin or assassins, for concealment. I examined the place minutely; and picked up, just as I was about to leave, a sugar-loaf-shaped brass waistcoat-button—such as I remembered to have seen worn, some twenty years before, by grooms' stable-helpers, and the like.

Mr. Sidney Herbert returned to Pembroke Castle on the fifth day after my arrival in Wiltshire, and I had a long conference with him on the morrow. He acquainted me with the remarkable fact of the shirt, found upon the murdered person, having been stolen, as it seemed, from his relative Henry Francis Gordon, whilst that gentleman was staying at the Antelope Inn, Salisbury. I, in my turn, related my conversation with the boy Beach. Mr. Herbert was struck painfully, so I thought, by the description I gave him—after the lad—of the dress and personal appearance of the young gentleman whom Beach had seen shooting, with another, near the place where the murder was supposedly committed, and afterwards in the High-street, Winchester.

"You describe young Frodsham," he at last exclaimed, in a very agitated manner. "Young Frodsham, than whom there is not a more estimable youth in all England! And, good heavens!" Mr. Herbert added, with still greater emotion, "Charles Frodsham, I remember now, was staying for a few days at the Antelope Hotel, Salisbury, with Gordon!"

"Indeed! I must see this Mr. Frodsham. The boy once heard him quarrelling fiercely with his companion about a young lady. Can you, sir, guess who that young lady may be?"

"Charles Frodsham is the betrothed lover of Miss Gertrude Annesley. One does not need to guess at that. It is a matter of notoriety."

"Do you know, sir, if he had a rival in the lady's favour?"

"I cannot say. I have no acquaintance—that is, no personal acquaintance—with the Annesley family. There is a mystery in this affair which it will be your duty to endeavour to clear up."

"Certainly, sir. I shall start immediately for

Winchester. Will you favour me with Mr. Frodsham's address?"

"Vale Lodge; about midway between Andover and Winton. Everybody knows the Frodshams."

The groom who opened the gate to me at Vale Lodge wore a red plush waistcoat, with brass sugar-loaf fashioned buttons, *and one—the lowest of the row—was missing!* "Is Mr. Charles Frodsham within?" I asked.

"No; he is absent in Andover, at an agricultural dinner."

"I will remain till he returns," was my reply. "I must see him, particularly after having seen you. You have lost a button off your waistcoat, my man; and, see! I have found it!"

The man stared at the button; said it was for "sartin sure" *his* button, though how I came by it he could not think. There was no guilt in the man's face. *He* was no accomplice in the murder, *if* murder had really been committed, of which I had begun to entertain vague doubts. Upon reflection, I thought it more advisable to leave a note for

Mr. Charles Frodsham, stating bluntly that Henry Clarke, a detective officer, wished to see him without delay, and would wait for that purpose at the George Hotel, Winchester, on the following day, till five P.M.

It was not quite noon when Mr. Charles Frodsham was shown into the room where I sat, and inquired what especial business "Mr. Clarke, a detective officer," could have with him?

The appearance of the young man excited me strangely. Surely I had seen him before—but where? He was handsome, singularly so; and his aspect, manners, were those of a mild-mannered, sensitive, somewhat finical, fastidious young gentleman. Surely *he* could be no murderer; and yet——

"Mr. Charles Frodsham, I have a rude and painful duty to perform," said I. "The high character you bear makes the duty painful. But that you stand so high in general estimation, I tell you candidly that, instead of requesting an interview, I should have taken you into custody upon the charge of wilful murder."

"Wilful murder! Good God! What can you mean?"

"You know what I mean, Mr. Charles Frodsham, or that face of yours would not so suddenly blanch to the hue of paper, your knees knock together, and you yourself sink down in nerveless prostration upon the sofa. I am very sorry; for you strangely interest me."

"You mean to accuse me," said the young man, in a broken, palpitating voice—"you mean to accuse me of—of having caused the death of the—the person found in Burnsley Coppice!"

"The facts accuse you, Mr. Charles Frodsham, not I; at least, they appear to do so. But, perhaps, you may be able to explain some ugly items away. I have no wish, however, to entrap you into making any statement—very far indeed from that; for yours is a face which I can hardly believe to be the index of a volume in which the dreadful crime of murder is written—in one of its earliest pages, too. Take time to consider. I will leave you alone for just one quarter of an hour. Do not attempt to leave. You cannot be allowed to do so.

But if, at the end^{at} the fifteen minutes, you decide upon giving me your confidence, I will, should doing so fall within the sphere of my duty, do my best to assist you. A detective officer is as much bound to shield the innocent as to drag the guilty to justice. At the same time, consider well before you speak. And you may read," said I, with some hesitation, "this anonymous letter, received by me but about an hour ago, through the post."

This was the letter :—

"Mr. Clarke, Detective police-officer.

"Sir,—You are come from London, as I hear, to inquire about the death of Edmund Musgrave. I, for one, have no doubt whatever that the corpse found in Burnsley Coppice was that of poor Musgrave. Now let me hint what I suspect. Edmund Musgrave and Charles Frodsham were rivals for the hand of Miss Gertrude Annesley. Most people intimate with the parties believed Musgrave to be the favoured suitor. Mr. Frodsham has been heard to say he thought so himself; and yet he bore himself in the presence of others with remarkable

politeness towards Musgrave. They were frequently out shooting together; and the very last time Edmund Musgrave was seen, he was in company with Charles Frodsham. They slept in a double-bedded room at the Crown Inn, Andover, and left the house in company. The clothes worn—I, in my own mind, feel quite sure—were Musgrave's, though there was no garment peculiar or distinguishing, *except the shirt*. Mr. Detective, sift that fact to the bottom, and you will find the hideous truth. Be sure of it.

“Mr. Charles Frodsham and Miss Gertrude Annesley are, it is said, to be married before many weeks have passed. The lady will have a large dowry. But there are often slips 'twixt cup and lip. ‘Foul deeds *will* rise, though all the earth o'erwhelm them, to men's eyes.’ This is all which for the present thinks proper to say

“A FRIEND OF MURDERED

“EDMUND MUSGRAVE.”

“Well, Mr. Clarke, my mind is fully made up. I will be very frank and explicit with you. My

mother, who is sorely distressed by the dark rumours floating about, enjoined me, immediately she had read your note, to confide unreservedly in you."

"The lady does me honour; but first distinctly understand, Mr. Frodsham, that every word you utter may be, will be, if the necessity arise, used against yourself. You have positively nothing to gain by taking me into your confidence, except that your statement,—supposing, as I will suppose it to be, *bonâ fide*,—may indicate to me some mode, some chance of relieving you of the frightful suspicion by which you are now pursued. That suspicion, if I am rightly informed, has caused, not perhaps the rupture of your engagement with Miss Annesley, but the indefinite postponement of the marriage!"

"That is true, Mr. Clarke; though the anonymous letter-writer does not seem to be aware of the fact."

"I am not so sure of that. The anonymous letter-writer may not wish it to be known, or suspected, that he is intimately acquainted with your

affairs. The letter does not, I readily admit, impress me favourably as regards the writer. But of this presently, if need be. Does your resolution hold to confide in me?"

"Yes: it is the best course I can adopt, as it seems to me. I am in the toils,—the victim, as I believe, of a foul conspiracy."

"Excuse me, Mr. Frodsham. Never mind about what you believe. Tell me, if it please you to do so, what you *know*."

"As you will. To begin then. Edmund Musgrave and I have known each other since childhood. A purer soul, as I believe, than his was never breathed into mortal mould. He was an orphan at an early age. I think he was but six years old when he lost his father. The mother died in giving Edmund birth. An uncle took charge of him, who died insolvent, as we now hear, about six months since. I frequently met Edmund Musgrave at the Annesleys'; and, finally, discovered that he entertained a warm attachment for Miss Gertrude Annesley. He never, I think, told his love. It would have been absurd to do so.

This he knew very well. He and I remained friends to the last—at least, I can answer for myself; but he grew shy, reserved, after being informed by Mrs. Annesley that I and Gertrude were affianced lovers. The anonymous letter-writer is correct in stating that we slept in the same room at the Crown, Andover, the last time I was in his company. The day before he had sent me a note, requesting the loan of two hundred pounds, and appointing to meet me at Andover. It was a pressing necessity, he said, which compelled him to solicit such a favour; and he could not undertake to repay me in less than six months. My mother gave me a cheque for the amount, which I handed to him at the Crown Inn. He obtained cash in gold, the next day, for the cheque, at the Andover Bank.”

“Do you know what persons, if any, besides the bankers, knew him to be in possession of such a sum in gold?”

“I do not. We parted in the High-street; and I never saw him again. And now, with respect to the shirt, marked with the initial letters H. F. G.

I had been staying at the Antelope, Salisbury, with young Mr. Gordon, a relative of Mr. Sidney Herbert. We were very intimate. He left in a hurry one day for France, and, in the bustle of packing up, his linen and mine must have got intermixed. At all events, I found in my valise at Andover, or rather my servant George Gibbs did, two shirts belonging to Mr. Gordon. I must tell you that it was not more than two or three hours after Gordon left that I received the note from Musgrave, requesting the loan of two hundred pounds. I started at once in my dog-cart for Andover, calling on my mother by the way. Musgrave was not at the Crown when I arrived there. He was out shooting. Before he returned, it came on to rain heavily. Musgrave was wetted to the skin, and had not sufficient change of linen with him. I bade Gibbs supply him from my valise. He did so, giving him, by accident or chance, one of Mr. Gordon's shirts. This is all which, in that respect, I can state."

"Are you confidently of opinion that the body

found in Burnsley Coppice was that of your friend Musgrave?"

"My firm conviction is that the body was *not* Musgrave's. But that will avail nothing. And now, Mr. Clarke, I come to the core, as it were, of this black business. Mr. Frazer, a gentlemanly man, but a comparative stranger in these parts, who, as he now says, kept purposely out of the way when the inquest was holden, requested the day before yesterday a private interview with me. He was accompanied by a person, whom I have since ascertained to be a highly respectable corn-dealer of Basingstoke. 'Do you recollect this gentleman?' said Frazer, rudely indicating me with his hand.

"'I think I do,' replied Mr. Crouch. 'Nay, I am sure I do. I saw him in the afternoon—near into evening, in fact, for it was growing dusk—of Andover fair-day. He, followed by a servant man, wearing a red plush waistcoat, was hurrying along the road towards Winchester, and they at the time were at no great distance from Burnsley Coppice.'"

"Andover fair-day was the day, was it not,

when Mr. Musgrave obtained gold for the cheque at the Andover Bank?"

"Yes; I have also to say that——"

A tap at the door interrupted him. A waiter announced that Mr. Frazer, Mr. Crouch, and a constable wanted to see Mr. Frodsham immediately. "Mrs. Frodsham," added the man, in a kindly, respectful tone, addressing Mr. Charles Frodsham, "has sent a message by Squire Lethbridge's groom that she will soon be here."

The young man looked at me. He was pale as paper, and his ashen lips quivered with agitation. "You had better say you will see these visitors, Mr. Frodsham." The waiter left, and I had just time, stepping behind a screen as I did so, to add, "*Mum*. I wish to hear what Mr. Frazer has to say."

"There is your prisoner," said Mr. Frazer. "I have evidence to prove that he is the murderer of Edmund Musgrave."

"Liar! villain!" shouted Charles Frodsham. "What evidence except your own evil suspicions can you produce against me?"

"Evidence to hang you, Charles Frodsham, Esquire," coolly returned Frazer. "But of that hereafter. The constable has a warrant for your arrest. For the arrest of Charles Frodsham, who before the inquest deposed upon oath that he did not leave Andover till two days after the departure of Edmund Musgrave ; and, for all that, was seen by Mr. Crouch hastening along the road from Burnsley Coppice on the evening of the day when Musgrave left you at the Crown. Constable, your duty."

"And pray, Mr. Frazer," said I, suddenly emerging from my place of concealment ; "and pray, Mr. Frazer, what motive induces you to put yourself forward in this matter so prominently ? You need not stare or frown. That sort of pantomime will be quite thrown away upon me. Here is my card. You will see that the name is not that of a man to be easily bullied or bamboozled."

"What the mischief do you mean, Mr. Detective Clarke ?"

"Simply to detect, if I can, all criminals, shroud themselves in whatever guise they may. And I

will candidly tell you, Mr. Frazer, that my present impression is that Mr. Edmund Musgrave is alive and well."

"Musgrave alive and well!" interrupted Frazer, flashing upon me with contemptuous triumph. "So much for the boasted penetration of London detectives. Of one brought down 'special' too, I hear, to enlighten the yokels."

"I have, perhaps, started the wrong hare. Be it so. I will merely add, supposing the corpse to have been that of Mr. Musgrave, of which you appear to have no doubt, having reasons of your own possibly for arriving at that conviction——"

"What the devil do you mean, sir?" fiercely broke in Frazer. "Well, yes, I have," he added, checking himself. "Well, yes, I have reasons of my own for believing that the murdered man was Edmund Musgrave."

"I thought so, and I will further take the liberty of saying that I feel a strong persuasion Mr. Frodsham will prove to be as innocent of the crime, supposing one to have been committed, as—as you yourself, for example."

The man blushed redly. Had the slight shaft sped at a venture found a joint in the armour of conscious guilt? I had known quite as shadowy possibilities harden very quickly into stern facts. Now, I could not for the life of me have given the slightest reason for the suspicious antipathy with which Frazer inspired me. The man's aspect was not that of one capable of a capital crime, of braving the gallows in pursuit of some coveted prize. Slyness, cunning, greed were stamped upon it plainly enough; but not more strongly than irresolution, infirmity of purpose. That antipathy was not, however, the less real because I could have assigned no tangible motive for it. The prepossession I had as instantly felt for Charles Frodsham, though as unintelligible to myself for the moment as my bitter dislike of Frazer, was soon to be found referable to quite natural causes. But of this presently.

"I do not understand you," presently replied Frazer. "Nor do I greatly care to do so. Mr. Charles Frodsham has, I dare say, told you, as he has told many others, that the last time he saw

Mr. Musgrave in life was in the High-street, Andover. Nay, the young gentleman, Mr. Detective, positively swore before the inquest that he did not see the deceased afterwards. To say nothing of other more strictly legal evidence that Charles Frodsham committed deliberate perjury in so swearing—which will in due time be forthcoming—Miss Annesley knows, will tell you that she knows, the two rivals met each other in the coppice, hours after they parted in the High-street, Andover.”

My eye was fixed upon Frodsham whilst Frazer spoke, and to my great dismay I saw that he cowered, shuddered in presence of the accusation; replying not a word, and trembling in every limb. When Frazer ceased speaking for a moment, Mr. Charles Frodsham could only faintly ejaculate in a shaky voice, while his dilated glance seemed chained to Frazer's malignant aspect, “Miss Annesley! What of Miss Annesley?”

“I must explain. It is plain to me,” continued Frazer, “that I am to a certain extent put upon

my defence ; that the officer here must have been listening to slanderous—worse than slanderous—imputations respecting some large monetary transactions between me and the deceased Edmund Musgrave.”

“It is false !” interrupted Frodsham, eagerly ; —I as promptly breaking in upon him.

“It is true !” exclaimed I, with excusable equivocation, it being highly desirable that Frazer should talk on to his heart’s content—“it is true that Mr. Frodsham has told me a great deal that I should much like to hear explained. Go on, Mr. Frazer ; I am all attention.”

“I had wished,” said Frazer, “ardently wished, —almost inexcusable in a moral point of view as that wish, that intention, may be considered—to have held aloof from the investigation, still, I have for some days past known, going on with respect to the death of Musgrave. I did not attend—purposely avoided attending—the coroner’s inquest. The prisoner here,” continued the accuser, with gathering fierceness, “has well repaid my forbearance. His motive is obvious enough. He, too

has known for some days that the London detective police has been put in motion ; and knowing that my evidence would jeopardise his neck——”

“Audacious, lying villain !” again interrupted Frodsham, but still pale, trembling, aghast. “Audacious, lying villain ! How dare you insinuate that I could have had any hand in the death of Musgrave, my intimate friend ?”

“I insinuate nothing, Charles Frodsham. When the proper time arrives I will prove—as *I only can prove*—beyond all reasonable doubt that the blood of Edmund Musgrave is on your head !”

A scream of indignant rage burst from Frodsham as he sprang furiously at his denouncer. The local police officer and I interposed in time to prevent an actual assault.

“No violence, Mr. Frodsham,” said Mr. Lynch, or it will be my duty to handcuff you. I do not see,” continued the officer, “the need of this conference ; this bandying to and fro of charges which must be investigated elsewhere. Indeed, I question its propriety. I hold a warrant for the apprehension of Mr. Charles Frodsham upon a charge

of wilful murder. My duty is simple as painful, and I must not delay its performance."

I interposed. "You are aware, Mr. Lynch, that I am entrusted with the investigation of this mysterious affair, by order of the Home Secretary himself. I must, therefore, request you to allow Mr. Frazer to finish his explanation, his voluntary explanation, in your prisoner's presence."

The officer acquiesced, and Frazer proceeded:—

"Of course, the prisoner's motive in slandering me was to anticipatively damage the value of my evidence."

"Curse your evidence," exclaimed Frodsham, with bitter passion; "I care nothing for what you can say, now or hereafter. But Miss Annesley's name was polluted by your lips. How dare you speak of that lady?"

"There is nothing, Mr. Clarke, an honest man dare not do, if it may be done lawfully," speaking directly to me instead of replying to Mr. Frodsham, in the affectation of a virtuous abhorrence of the alleged criminal, which I was quite sure he did not feel.

"No, no, Mr. Frazer," said I, mentally. "No, no; it isn't that, my man. With all your studied hardihood of demeanour, you cannot steadily face the prisoner. The ends by which this knot can be untied have not, or I greatly err, been yet grasped."

"There is nothing, Mr. Clarke, which an honest man dare not do, if it may be lawfully done. I *did* speak of Miss Annesley. That young lady, with her mother, left for London on the very day after the disappearance of poor Musgrave. They returned yesterday afternoon—a day or two earlier, I have been told, than they were expected. Mr. Sidney Herbert, who takes a strong interest in this case, chanced to call at Holme-place, with the Reverend Mr. Pullen, justice of the peace for the county. The local papers were on a table, unopened. I mean that they had not been read by either of the ladies. Mr. Herbert, as I understand, called Mrs. Annesley's attention to the report of the proceedings before the coroner. Miss Annesley, who, one would suppose, could not have heard even a rumour of what had occurred, was painfully agi-

tated, and it was with difficulty she could comply with her mother's request to read the report aloud. She did so, however, till she came to the prisoner's evidence, and especially to his declaration upon oath that he had not seen or spoken with the deceased since he had parted with him in the High-street, Andover. 'That is false!' exclaimed the young lady, with—my reverend informant said—hysterical excitement. 'Charles Frodsham met that unfortunate Musgrave in Burnsley Coppice, by appointment, on the very day before mamma and I left for London. O . . . !' the young lady suddenly exclaimed, perceiving the impression of her words upon the countenances of the two magistrates present—'O . . . : What have I said—done——' and fainted. But for the involuntary declaration of Miss Annesley's, it is probable the warrant for Mr. Frodsham's arrest would not have issued ; at least, not immediately."

We were all silent for a few moments. My increasing faith in Charles Frodsham's innocence was sadly shaken by Frazer's statement. Yet, heaven and earth ! what possible motive could he

have had for committing such a crime, and in so brutal a manner? Rivalry in love—jealousy? But Musgrave was a rejected suitor, and about to leave England, probably for ever.

“Miss Annesley,” said Charles Frodsham, whom Frazer’s words seemed to have relieved, “Miss Annesley spoke truly, according to her belief. The lady is mistaken, as I can easily prove. Come, sir,” he added, rising; “you and I had better be gone. The jail is not far off; but I shall prefer riding even that short distance in a closed fly. I suppose that favour is permissible, Mr. Lynch?”

“Certainly, sir. I will order one to be immediately brought to the back entrance.”

“One moment,” said I, “if you please. Just one. What was the nature of the money-transactions between Mr. Frazer and the deceased Musgrave, with respect to which you, Mr. Frodsham, have, it is alleged, spoken slanderously of Mr. Frazer?”

“Mr. Frazer has exhibited a number of stamped and unstamped pieces of paper, purporting to be acknowledgments of moneys—large sums—lent by him to Musgrave. I *have* said—and am not afraid

or ashamed to admit I have said—that the relative characters borne by Edmund Musgrave and John Frazer, though certainly not much is known of Mr. Frazer's, he being, as I have said, a stranger in the county,—would have justified a very rigorous investigation of the claim had Mr. Musgrave left property which might have been attached for it. I am bound, however, to admit,” said Mr. Frodsham, with bitter sarcasm, “that in the three or four specimens I have seen, the signature of Edmund Musgrave is very well done indeed !”

Frazer's furious reply to this taunt was arrested by a waiter's announcement that the fly was in waiting.

“You will presently see my mother,” said Mr. Charles Frodsham, extending me his hand. “She has met you before, where or when I know not. Bid her be of good heart. I have no fear—not the slightest. *Magna est veritas et prevalebit!* I have firm faith in that ancient saw. Good-bye! for a short time only—be quite sure of it !”

“Yes ; and I, after long and varied experience of detective life, have a firm faith that truth will

in the end prevail, however cunningly the forces of fraud may be arrayed against it, in nine hundred and ninety-nine out of a thousand instances. And you Mr. Frazer — spite of that spasmodical grin (a miserable failure I might tell you, but I wont)—believe that truth will prevail ; but then, like the devils, you *may* believe *and tremble!*”

“I wish to hold no further converse with you, Mr. Frazer,” said I, interrupting him, when we were alone. (The worthy burgess of Basingstoke—I had omitted, no very serious oversight, to mention—had slid out of the room, after, I think, being in it a few minutes only. I neither knew exactly when he went, nor why he came.) “I wish to hold no further converse with you, Mr. Frazer. Pursue your own course. That course is not mine. We may hunt counter, but certainly not in couple. Good day.”

A very, very queer business this, on hand. Yet so far as I collated the few indisputable facts connected therewith, they did not appear to be decisive.

The ugliest, as regarded Mr. Frodsham, was Miss Annesley's declaration that he *had* seen Musgrave—and by appointment too—after parting with him in Andover ; the appointment, moreover, being in the very wood or coppice where the body was found—he having deliberately sworn before the coroner that he had *not* seen the murdered man after so parting with him. To be sure, Mr. Frodsham said the lady was mistaken ; yet how could that well be ? Frazer, too, promised disclosures confirmatory of Miss Annesley's statement, and something more. But again—a hundred times again — *why* should Frodsham have murdered Musgrave ? The manner of death, as discoverable by the state of the corpse, suggested that the assassin must have—striking first, probably, from behind—beaten in the victim's skull with a club or stake. Could that, under any conceivable circumstances, have been the act of a gentleman ? And, again, would Mr. Frodsham have taken a servant with him if he ever so remotely contemplated such a deed ? Might it, perchance, be that the servant—the button of whose red waistcoat I had found

at the place of murder—might, with or without his master's direction, have been the actual assassin? No money was found upon the corpse. Musgrave had been robbed as well as murdered—it being certain that he must have had all, or nearly all, the two hundred pounds lent him by Frodsham in his pockets; no trace of it, or of his having paid any portion away, having been discovered. The man *looked* like an honest, blithe, free-hearted fellow; but I required not the authority of Shakespere to know that men are not always what they seem to be. Mr. Frodsham had been seen *with* the servant near the coppice. Two inferences would seem to naturally flow from that circumstance, *supposing* Mr. Frodsham had any concernment in Musgrave's death. One, that Mr. Frodsham employed the groom to murder the unfortunate gentleman for no conceivable object: the other, that the groom having perpetrated the crime on his own account, for the sake of the booty to be obtained let us say, his master had connived at it—made himself an accomplice after the fact with the assassin. Both inferences equally untenable, absurd!

Then as to Mr. Frodsham's counter-charge, so to speak, against Frazer, with reference to that person having lent the deceased large sums upon unguaranteed promissory notes and IOU's, as I understood; that, upon the face of it, seemed utterly ridiculous. Musgrave had left no estate, no property of any kind; what motive, therefore, could Frazer have in setting up a fraudulent claim, which there were no assets to meet, even if it could be legally established? I could make neither head nor tail of the perplexing business, when the waiter announced that a lady was below and wished to see Mr. Clarke, the detective-officer, immediately.

What a consummate, ridiculous fool the lady—supposing, that under the crushing load of anguish which weighed upon her spirit, any sense of the ludicrous could have existed—must have thought the iron-grey haired man to be, who at sight of her staggered back as if suddenly struck by a dagger; breathless, fainting—a thousand lights dancing in his eyes. Just fancy a detective police-officer, hardened, cynicized by the wear and tear

of five-and-twenty years' experience in the most thoroughly disenchanting walk of life in which man can crawl to his goal, the grave, being so affected. Yet so it was. Mrs. Frodsham was the Charlotte Gray of my young life ; of whom I once dreamed delicious dreams, and, in imagination, stole immortal blessings from her lips. A glance at that silly little romance wont detain us long, and is besides necessary to the development of this detective narrative. I had gone, being then about twenty years of age, to Clifton for a holiday, and to benefit my health, which was not just then first-rate. One day, when passing over the river from Clifton to the Leigh woods, the boat, by the boisterous foolery of two half-drunken scamps in the dress of gentlemen, capsized. There was not much danger, as abundant help was close at hand—for a swimmer absolutely none ; but a young lady, Miss Charlotte Gray, whom I shall not attempt to describe, but whose beauty and grace gave me the only genuine heartquake I have ever felt, was for a few moments in real danger, from which I rescued her with but slight effort, and no risk whatever to myself. Yet

was I prouder of that tiny exploit than of any achievement of my life. Her father, the Reverend Mr. Gray, and two sisters were waiting for her at the landing-place. The natural terror excited by seeing a beloved daughter and sister struggling, screaming, sinking in the swift river, immensely exaggerated the merit of a very simple act; and the family were profuse of thanks to the young lady's *brave* deliverer. I slept that night at the reverend gentleman's house; and he finding I was fond fishing, gave me an invitation to sport at any and all times in a splendid trout-stream at no great distance, rented by Mr. Gray for himself and sons, fine-hearted young men and first-rate anglers. I was there every day; the young ladies often joined us for an hour or two, and more than once listened with apparent interest—Miss Charlotte Gray especially—to my youthful adventures as a detective in the bud. In short, I became awfully spooney about the divine damsel, and it was quite as much an accident as a mercy that I did not commit the unutterable absurdity of tendering Miss Charlotte Gray the homage and the hand

of an embryo policeman, in enjoyment of a salary to the large extent, deducting allowance for clothes, of eighteen shillings and sixpence per week. The accident was my chancing to overhear a jocular remark of one of the lady's brothers, to the effect that he hoped Clarke, a very decent fellow in his way, was not going to make an egregious donkey of himself about Charlotte.

I did not hear the rejoinder; but the good-humoured guffaw contributed to by the three young men might have been heard a mile off. Thank Heaven, I got away unseen, packed up my traps forthwith, and left for town by one of the evening trains, posting on my way to the station a brief note expressive of my grateful sense of the Reverend Mr. Gray's courtesies, and bidding himself and family a respectful farewell, an unexpected summons from the chief officer at Bow-street obliging me to leave Clifton at almost literally an hour's notice. There ended in a vital sense the romance of my life. That is to say, the volume was closed; but when opened again after, as I have said, the lapse of a quarter of a century, the characters

graven on those early leaves were found to be still bright, vivid, unchanged. The heat and dust of life had hidden, not dimmed them.

The lady—how gently time had dealt with her!—came towards me, and, with the sweetest, saddest smile, extended her hand to be clasped in mine. The power which watches over policemen and puppies of all ages could alone have saved me from plumping down, and——Well, we'll skip that. The vertigo passed away. I could hear and comprehend, as in the haziness of a dream, that the lady before me said, "You do not, perhaps, remember me." (Great ! did I not? The old time, in all its flood of fulness, was back upon me, and she perceived nothing of the kind.) "You do not perhaps remember me—remember that you once saved my life! I am her you knew as Charlotte Gray." (She had never, then, mentioned that trifling incident to her son, for he said his mother had met with me, but he knew not when or where. This bitter thought curdled through my veins as she spoke. I had been in her thought merely as a Newfoundland dog, to be patted on

the back for a service rendered, and forgotten till his aid should, upon an emergency, be again required.)

"I am her you knew as Charlotte Gray, whose life you saved. I have read of your exploits as a detective officer with much interest ; and I have thought that by your aid a life dearer to me than my own—that of my son—may be saved ; above all, his character vindicated, cleared of foul reproach, suspicion ; which not done, mere existence would be a burden, not a blessing."

"Speak on, madam ; speak on !" I gasped, like the spasmodic, stupid gaby that I must have been. "All that you require of me shall be done, if man may do it."

"I was sure," said the silvery voice I had heard so often in my dreams, "I felt sure you would help us to the best of your ability in the unmasking of villany, however skilfully contrived."

"You have judged rightly, madam. I felt interested for your son the very moment I saw him. Now I know why. He is a masculine resemblance of the beauteous being——." I stopped abruptly ; curbed sharply up, not alone by the rein of what

common sense was for the moment left me, but by the "beauteous being's" haughty stare of surprise. "I beg pardon, madam," I went on, concealing my confusion as well as might be,— "I beg pardon, madam. We must not waste precious moments. To fight this battle with success—with any chance of success—I must know exactly with what, with whom, I may have to contend."

Mrs. Frodsham said she was there to place me in possession of all the facts of the case, so far as they were known to her. Precious facts they were truly! Her son had never felt the slightest enmity towards poor Musgrave. Why should he have done so? And Charles had never met the unfortunate young man after parting with him in Andover. She was positive of that, for Charles had told her so himself, &c. &c. Bless the "beauteous being's" five wits! Valuable "facts" those truly! One startling one was at last elicited, by my remarking that Miss Annesley seemed confident that Mr. Charles Frodsham *had* met Musgrave in Burnsley Coppice, and by appointment.

"So I have heard," said the lady-mother, "and

I have been to Holme-place to ask for an explanation. Miss Annesley is, however, too ill to be spoken with. It is true," continued Mrs. Frodsham, with some hesitation, "that my son received a note by post from Musgrave, requesting to see him at that place, and giving as a reason for selecting such a rendezvous, that he was at hide-and-seek with bailiffs. Charles did go with his servant to meet Mr. Musgrave, but did not find him there."

"Why, madam, was that most important fact not stated before the coroner? Its concealment may have a sinister bearing upon the case."

"The reason was," said Mrs. Frodsham, with increasing agitation, "that there was an offensive allusion to Miss Annesley in the note. He feared, should he mention the circumstance, that he might be obliged to produce the note, which would, of course, be read in open court, and published in the newspapers."

"I understand. Still, it is unfortunate. Probably," I added, "your son may have mentioned to Miss Annesley that he had received such a letter

and intended keeping the appointment? That would account for, and, to a very considerable extent, take the sting out of the statement she was surprised into making."

"It is very, very probable he did so."

"Have you the note, addressed by Musgrave to your son?"

"No; but it may, no doubt, be found amongst my son's papers."

"You are sure it was written by Musgrave?"

"Oh, yes. The handwriting—a peculiar one—was undoubtedly Mr. Musgrave's; but that he should have penned such a note was almost beyond belief. I mean the allusion to Miss Annesley."

"I am sorry, very sorry, the fact of your son having gone to Burnsley Coppice for the express purpose of meeting with Musgrave was not openly avowed. And Miss Annesley will be obliged to admit that Mr. Charles Frodsham was much and justly irritated with Musgrave when he set out to meet him in the coppice, where the body was found. It is very unfortunate. At the same time, madam, let me assure you that the sort of instinctive confi-

dence I feel in your son's innocence is not weakened—not sensibly weakened. But not thinking it right to attempt lulling even a mother into a false security, I must candidly say, that if Frazer should be as good, or more correctly, as bad as his word, we shall have a formidable case to meet.”

“Frazer is a low, despicable villain,” exclaimed Mrs. Frodsham.

“Your words echo my own thoughts. At all events, depend on my zeal, madam; you may do so confidently.”

“I do—I do, Mr. Clarke; and I feel assured that with your guidance we shall emerge safely, swiftly, from this valley of the Shadow of Death. I shall, of course, see you shortly again. Good-bye.” Again the ungloved hand was extended to me; and the lips—the eyes which sorrow gemmed with a yet diviner radiance, again entranced me with that sweet, sad smile. Heaven and earth! could I not, at that moment, have—*Tut!* we have had already overmuch of such silly stuff.

By half-past ten on the following morning I, by the permission of the governor, had a brief interview

with Mr. Charles Frodsham in Winchester Jail. He *had* shown Musgrave's note, appointing to meet him at Burnsley Coppice, to Miss Annesley. He himself was punctual to the time appointed, and waited about an hour; but Musgrave not appearing, he went away. I asked him to give me a note to his mother, requesting her to show me the note from Musgrave making the assignation. The answer was, to my dismay, that he had destroyed it. A surmise had crossed my mind that Frazer, who, according to Charles Frodsham, was skilful in the imitation of Musgrave's writing, might have sent the note. A wild guess, no doubt; but detective officers are accustomed, like drowning men, to catch at straws—which straws are not infrequently found to be adjuncts to more reliable, firmer facts.

As we were talking, Mr. Frodsham's groom was ushered into the room—not the cell—the accused being a person of too much consequence in the county to herd with the common file of suspected felons. He brought a valise and a letter from Mrs. Frodsham. I again closely scrutinized the man's

aspect, and could discern no trace, no sign, no shadow of guilt. He wore the plush waistcoat, and the missing button had been replaced by one of a slightly different pattern. I determined to subject him to a test which no murderer or abettor of a murderer could, I was quite certain, endure without wincing. I bade Mr. Frodsham an abrupt adieu, and left. The groom soon followed, and was crossing the yard towards the outer gate, when I suddenly pounced on him, and seizing his arm, said, showing the button:—"This is the right button for your waistcoat! I found it on the spot where Mr. Musgrave was murdered! Was it torn off in the struggle?"

"D—n the button!" angrily replied the young man. "What do I know about it; and why do you squeeze my arm as if it was in a vice? Let go, will you, Mr. Detective?"

My previous strong opinion that the groom was innocent of the crime was now conviction. I withdrew my grasp of his arm, and said in a very much milder tone:—"Have you ever lent the waistcoat you have on to anybody?"

“Not I. Why, it was only the day before he went away that I bought it of Tom Sawkins. I fancied it like, and young master gave me leave to wear it.”

“And who is Tom Sawkins?”

“Tom Sawkins *was* Mr. Musgrave’s servant; and meant, so he at one time said, to leave the country with him.”

“Mr. Musgrave’s servant! And when did you buy the waistcoat of him?”

“Well, I bought it of him, and paid for it, if you must know, more than a month ago; but I only got it, and that after a bit of bustle—hearing, as I did, that he was going away at last for good and all—the very day before Mr. Musgrave’s body was found.”

“But you were seen wearing a red waistcoat before then?”

“I have always worn a red waistcoat; but this is a bran new fancy one, which, as I said, young master humoured me to have. I pointed out,” added the man, “that one button was missing; but Tom Sawkins said I

could easily match it for twopence or threepence."

"Sawkins has left the country, you say. How do you know that?"

"I know he has left these parts. He said he was off to the West Indies."

"The West Indies! A very unlikely destination. That, however, you have nothing to do with. I am quite satisfied so far as you are concerned. Good day!"

Here was a new light thrown upon the dark tragedy of Burnsley Coppice! Might it not have been that Mr. Musgrave, with his servant, had reached the place of appointment too late to meet Mr. Frodsham; and that his own servant, Sawkins, knowing his master had a large sum in gold, and tempted by opportunity, had slain and robbed him? The suspicion had great likelihood. One would certainly suppose, that having committed such a crime and bagged the booty, he would at once have fled the country. There might, however, have been some reason or reasons necessitating his stay for a time. One, that remaining, even but a short time after his

master's disappearance, he would divert suspicion from himself. At any rate, Mr. Sawkins would have to be sought after without delay. As to his having gone to the West Indies, that was fudge—America, had he really left the country, would be his refuge.

I returned to the George, and was taking lunch when Mr. Lynch, the county constable, came in. "I merely called to say that a warrant has been issued for the apprehension of Mr. Frodsham's groom, John Major, and that I have just lodged him in jail."

"The deuce! With what crime is he charged?"

"Wilful murder only; nothing more serious than that."

"Do you know upon whose deposition the warrant is based?"

"Upon Mr. Frazer's, I was told at the office of the county clerk. I have another piece of news," added Lynch, with a kind of distorted, twisted grin;—the bridge of his nose had been broken, and he had a hare lip. "I have another piece of news. Mr. Musgrave, had he lived, would now be

a rich man. A bachelor uncle, seized with sudden, fatal illness at some place in Italy about a month since, has left him all he died possessed of; between thirty and forty thousand pounds in cash, it is reported. The I O U's and promissory notes held by Mr. Frazer are worth twenty shillings in the pound now. A lucky gentleman; and as I happen to know, luck was wanted."

"This is news indeed, Mr. Lynch. An uncle who died a month ago in Italy left, you say, between thirty and forty thousand pounds to his nephew, Edmund Musgrave. You also say that to your knowledge this great slice of luck was greatly needed by Mr. Frazer?"

"Yes. Two writs for large amounts I know are out against him. He has gained a little time under the plea that he had suffered such a tremendous loss by the deceased Mr. Musgrave, that if time—and he did not ask for a long day—were not given, he would be compelled to knock up."

"And it is upon an affidavit of this Frazer that Mr. Frodsham's groom has been consigned to prison as a principal or aider and abettor in the

murder of Musgrave, thereby effectually preventing him appearing as a witness on Mr. Frodsham's behalf. Upon my word, Mr. Lynch, it strikes me that some one—we need not mention names—is playing a desperately bold game." Mr. Lynch said he thought so too, and we presently parted.

There are few persons that have lived long in the world, who have not observed how slight a thing will often turn awry, entirely change the course of human affairs. A few minutes after Mr. Lynch left, I had made up my mind that it was desirable I should see Mrs. Frodsham without delay, and I directed a saddle-horse to be brought round to the front door. A fancy, however, seizing me to first step over the way, and have a quiet game of billiards with the marker, I gave orders not to saddle the horse till I returned, which would be in about an hour. I was not absent three minutes. Stepping briskly along the pavement near the market cross, I trod upon a piece of orange-peel, slipped, lost my balance, fell heavily with my left foot twisted under me, and unable to rise of myself, was carried over to the

George, put to bed, and informed by Dr. Lyford, who was quickly in attendance, that I had as bad a sprained ankle as he had ever been called upon to prescribe for. A very pleasant announcement that; and the surgeon moreover, as it proved, had not in the slightest degree exaggerated the gravity of the hurt. It was quite three weeks before I could leave my chamber, and then but limpingly. Meanwhile, the Frodsham-Musgrave-Frazer business had been, looked at from my stand-point, bedevilled in most woful fashion. But for the foolish fancy to play a game of billiards, all might have been well; as it was, all was wrong—abominably, wretchedly wrong.

Mrs. Frodsham could neither consult with me personally, nor even by letter, though written counsel would hardly have availed much. Fretful impatience, the torture of the sprain, anxiety of mind—not altogether, nor perhaps chiefly, respecting Mr. Charles Frodsham's case, for I had just then worries that touched me, or ought to have touched me more nearly, would have done so but for the mother—brought on fever of a mild type,

but sufficiently severe to induce Dr. Lyford to order that I should not see any one or be disturbed with any kind of business for a time. That time did not exceed ten days, when the fever, such as it was, had left me, and the sprain alone chained me to my room. So short a period had sufficed to do all the mischief.

Disturbed by some vague rumours in which the names of Mrs. and Mr. Frodsham and Mr. Frazer were mixed up, reported to me by Dr. Lyford, I dispatched a note to the lady-mother, begging her to favour me with an interview at her earliest convenience. She had, I knew, called the second day after the accident, and expressed regret at not being able to see me. In due course of post I received a reply : Mrs. Frodsham was too unwell to see Mr. Clarke, or even to leave her house. Mr. B——, her solicitor, would, however, confer with him on her behalf, and she hoped Mr. Clarke would be able to be present at the next examination of her son before the magistrates, the first having been one of form only, on account of the absence of Mr. Frazer. It was fixed for that day week. Mrs.

Frodsham was happy to inform Mr. Clarke that her solicitor felt confident her son would be then discharged out of custody by the bench, and exonerated from all suspicion.

“The deuce he will ! I should much like to be acquainted with the basis of the solicitor’s confident opinion,” was the mental comment I made upon Mrs. Frodsham’s missive ; and, as a chance of obtaining some inkling of it, I sent a message to the officer, Lynch, requesting to see him. He was soon with me ; and from what he told me, I guessed at once how matters really stood.

Frazer had gone off suddenly, no one knew whither ; and a warrant had been issued which, could he be found, would compel his appearance before the magistrates, to give evidence in Mr. Frodsham’s case. He was known to have been twice or thrice at Mrs. Frodsham’s, that lady’s lawyer being present each time. A few hours only after his last interview with her, he left per mail for London, and had not since been heard of.

It had since oozed out that a gentleman named Hanbury, who, it was believed, would be Mrs.

Frodsham's second husband, had purchased, at their full nominal value (over six thousand pounds), the whole of the promissory notes, I. O. U's, of the late Mr. Musgrave, held by Frazer. Mr. Hanbury, supposing the authenticity of these securities should be established, would, no doubt, receive his money; but, for all that, it was the generally received opinion that the bargain was a corrupt one, and entered into by advice of Mrs. Frodsham's lawyer—"the greatest noodle as to criminal practice in the county"—for the purpose of getting and keeping Frazer out of the way. Mrs. Frodsham, it was also generally suspected, had bribed the fellow heavily, independently of the so-called "commercial transaction," to which there could be little doubt she was virtually a party.

"Mrs. Frodsham's attorney ought to be struck off the roll for giving his client such advice. Charles Frodsham's character will be blasted for ever; he will bear the brand of a murderer to the last day of his life. Struck off the roll!" added I, with passion, for I was sorely dismayed, knowing, as I did, how bitterly the mother would reproach

herself when the dire consequence of what she had done became apparent to her—"Struck off the roll, did I say? The blundering idiot ought to be hanged himself. No effort, no cost should be spared to apprehend Frazer, and compel his attendance before the magistrates. It is Mr. Frodsham's only chance."

Lynch quite agreed with me; but thought it very unlikely such a wily gentleman would allow himself to be caught, especially if a rumour, widely circulated, should prove correct——

"That the promissory notes, I O U's, are forgeries," I interrupted, with vivacity. "I have not the slightest doubt they are—no more than I have that Frazer's evidence would, under cross-examination, have been blown to the devil; whilst now——"

"Mr. B——, the solicitor, wishes to speak with Mr. Clarke," announced a waiter.

I desired Mr. B—— to be shown in; and, promising to look in again on the morrow, Mr. Lynch left.

I could have spat at the pompous prig of an attorney, who came bustling in, bedressed as if just

stepped out of a Madame Tussaud show-box. With a pinchbeck sort of "Chesterfield" condescending civility, Mr. B—— said, after favouring me with a gracious nod or bob:—

"My lady-client, Mrs. Frodsham, has thought it might be as well that I should see you relative to the unfortunate affair with which the name of her son and of one Edmund Musgrave—supposed to have been slain by violence—are disagreeably mixed up. If you know of any circumstance, Mr. Detective Clarke, in connexion therewith to communicate, I shall be most happy to hear it, and give you my opinion of its legal value and bearing."

"I have no wish to be favoured with your legal opinion, Mr. B——, upon any subject whatever. I wrote to your lady-client, asking to see her here, as I could not wait upon her at the Elms. My purpose was to caution, to advise her. The only counsel I can now give is, that she, for her son's sake, spare no cost to secure the appearance of Mr. Frazer before the bench of magistrates."

"What do you say, Clarke?" exclaimed the

round-bellied, bag-cheeked, powdered-hair humbug. "What do you say, Clarke? Surely, as a friend—a humble friend, of course—to the Frodsham family, you must, in your heart, though it might not be decorous to say so, rejoice that so formidable an adverse witness as Frazer has taken himself off in the very nick of time?"

"The very worst, the most calamitous circumstance for the Frodsham family that could have happened. If Frazer be *not* found, Mr. Charles Frodsham, for any worth that life will be to him, may as well perform the office of hangman for himself."

"Why, good God, Clarke, how wildly you talk!" rejoined the solicitor, with put-on pretentiousness, though really, one could see with half an eye he was a good deal flustered. "You cannot have seen Frazer's affidavit. I have a copy with me. Please to read it."

"Hem! ha! The deponent maketh oath and saith he saw Charles Frodsham and Edmund Musgrave, himself unobserved by either, together in Burnsley Coppice, on the afternoon of the 10th

of October last past. That they were furiously quarreling about a lady, and walking to and fro with violent gesticulation. Mr. Charles Frodsham had a very stout knobbed stick in his hand; an ash stick the deponent believes. That, fearing to be seen listening to a private conversation between two gentlemen, both of them acquaintances and friends of his, deponent went away; and when at a distance of three or four hundred yards paused to consider whether, after all, he ought not to go back and endeavour to appease their quarrel. He was about to do so, when Charles Frodsham came out of the wood with his servant, John Major, whom the deponent had not before noticed; and after looking about, as if to ascertain no one was in sight, walk hurriedly away—the man in close and apparently familiar conversation with his master, which a good deal surprised deponent at the time. Seeing there was no longer any reason for his interference, and not desiring just then to see Edmund Musgrave, with whom two or three days before he himself had had high words about money matters, deponent went home, and thought

no more of the matter till the dead body of Musgrave was found."

"That, stripped of surplusage, is about the sum and substance of Frazer's affidavit, Mr. B——; and the devil's own concoction it will be found to be, if we can only contrive to get deponent into the witness-box. But that we shall not do, depend upon it, if Frazer can anyhow help it. Is it true that the securities purporting to be signed by Edmund Musgrave," I added, sharply, "have been found to be so many forgeries? And that another of your *fortunate* clients, a Mr. Hanbury, has been consequently swindled to the tune of between seven and eight thousand pounds?"

"Mr. Clarke," said the nettled attorney, swelling like a turkey-cock, "your tone is offensive. Please to remember the social difference betwixt yourself and me."

"Social stuff and nonsense! We are speaking of something much too serious for our talk to be buttered over with compliments. I am plain of speech, and tell you, Mr. B——, that if by your advice—I do not ask your confidence, would not

accept it—that if by your advice Frazer has been bribed, directly or indirectly, to leave the country, you have morally destroyed your clients. Mr. Charles Frodsham, had the magistrates committed him for trial, would have been triumphantly acquitted, have left the court without a taint of suspicion attaching to him, had the perjured forger Frazer appeared against him, whereas——”

“Who says Mr. Frazer is a forger?” interrupted the lawyer; “I was not before aware that London detectives accepted as gospel truth every silly rumour which malignity and spite may set afloat?”

“Nor do they; but I am not for that the less positive that your client Hanbury’s ‘securities’ are not worth the ink they were written with. I begin to see through this millstone, Mr. B——, and shall strongly advise Mr. Charles Frodsham to himself ask the Bench to again and again remand the case, till the witness who made the lying deposition I just now glanced through shall be found.”

“Mr. Frodsham to remain in prison the while? Upon my word, that is sagacious advice.”

“Sound advice, Mr. B——, depend upon it. But as our opinions differ quite as much as our relative social positions, it is useless to continue this conversation. I must, therefore, wish you good-day.”

CHAPTER II.

MY SECOND TRIP ACROSS THE ATLANTIC.

MR. CHARLES FRODSHAM had no occasion to solicit a remand on behalf of himself and John Major. That course was at once taken by the magistrates, as soon as they were informed that Frazer had not made his appearance. The adjournment was for a fortnight, before the expiration of which I had practically the management of the case, the merely legal formalities being entrusted to Mr. B——’s clerk, a shrewd fellow, who did his duty honestly, though entirely convinced in his own mind of both prisoners’ guilt. In truth, there was scarcely another opinion in the county. Mr. Sidney Herbert did not go with the ruck of general belief, and *his* judgment was worth that of a thousand ordinary men. It was by his

earnest recommendation that the conduct of the defence was left to my guidance : the highest compliment I was ever paid in my life. I must not omit to state that Miss Annesley had explained to him, as she did to me, that her assertion that Charles Frodsham *had* met Musgrave by appointment in Burnsley Coppice, the day before she and Mrs. Annesley left for London, had no other foundation than that Mr. Frodsham told her he was going to meet him there, and indeed shown her the note he had received, making the appointment.

“A proof, at all events, that Mr. Frodsham did not *intend* to commit homicidal violence upon poor Musgrave. I agree with you, however,” added the right honourable gentleman, “that Frodsham committed a grave error in not frankly stating before the inquest that he did go, by appointment, to Burnsley Coppice, in the expectation of seeing Musgrave.”

The Court was thronged immediately the doors were opened on the day appointed for the adjourned examination of the prisoners. We had retained counsel, Mr. Richard Missing, of much

and deserved local celebrity, rather to watch the proceedings than enter upon any substantive defence. It was expected, no Frazer being forthcoming, that the prisoners would be again remanded. The magistrates, however, resolved to proceed with the case as it stood. A weaker one, leaving out of consideration Frazer's sworn deposition, I had seldom heard,—no clear proof even that the dead body found in Burnsley Coppice was Edmund Musgrave's could be adduced; the Bench nevertheless decided upon sending the case to trial, and Charles Frodsham with John Major were committed to the next March Assize (it was full five months till then), for the wilful murder of Edmund Musgrave. The county magistrates could not have bailed the prisoners, in such a case, had they been inclined to do so, which assuredly they were not. An application was made to Mr. Baron Platt at chambers, in London, before whom the prisoners were taken by *habeas corpus*; but he refused bail, though tendered to any amount.

The rending, convulsive grief, the passionate agony of Mrs. Frodsham, was very painful to wit-

ness. I positively, for a time, feared for her life ; and many days passed before she could be brought to listen with patience to suggestions of consolation—of hope. I even now feel pleasure in the remembrance that it was to me she first turned, as the person in whose judgment, exertions, she could place reliance.

I had not meantime been idle. One of the earliest visits I paid was to the lodgings last occupied by Tom Sawkins, formerly servant to Mr. Musgrave. It was a mean garret, in a mean house, just out of Andover, tenanted by an aged pensioner and his wife. Old Tomlinson had been in the service many years as a marine, and was present, he told me, at Trafalgar, in the *Téméraire*, Captain Harvey. He was a loquacious old fellow—readily accepted my offer of a “ pipe and pot ” at the Horse Shoes inn ; and, whilst enjoying himself there, freely told me all he knew about Tom Sawkins.

“ Not much account wasn’t Tom Sawkins,” he said ; “ never since he was sixpenn’orth of halfpence high. A sort of a hulking, poaching, lie-about feilcw. He was a good shot, and that was perhaps

why Mr. Musgrave kept him in his service for five or six months, not more than that, and he never stopped anywhere else half so long."

"Was Tom flush of money before he left?"

Well, the veteran could not say the fellow was very flush, but he *did* see him pull out of a leather purse, when he came home drunk one night, and Tomlinson helped him upstairs to bed, five or six gold sovereigns!

"Sovereigns! When was that?"

"Well, the very night before he left. And I never seed him with more than as many shillings afore! Curious enough, he wanted to persuade me next day, when I joked about the fortune he had come into, that the sovereigns I seed were flash sovereigns. 'Walker!' says I. 'Well,' says he, 'if you must know, them yellow-boys is all I got left out of ten which my young master Musgrave gave me for wages, and a trifle for extra work, before he left; but,' says Tom, 'don't you let out that I have got the money, as I owes some trifles which I should be tore to pieces about if they know'd I had a few pounds.' 'Well,' says I, 'Tom, what you got or

what you owes is no bread and cheese of mine. You don't owe me no rent ; as I'll take blessed care you don't.' About an hour afterwards, when I looked into his crib, to ask if he wanted anything fetched, as I was goin' to the chandler's, I seed that he had hooked it, and took what few traps he had with him. The old woman says I frightened him away,—he thinking I should tell people he was in debt to, what a lot of tin he'd got. I'm thinking myself that that must have been about the size of it."

"I *don't* think so. Did any one in particular call upon him after his master was thought to have left the country?"

"No ; no one in particular. There was Jack Major, who is in trouble about the murder (but which I'm not going to believe he had any hand in), called to fetch a dandy red waistcoat which he had bought and paid for ; and a precious shindy there was before he got it."

"Mr. Frazer, for example, did not call upon him?"

"Mr. Frazer ! No, he did *not* call ; but, be-

tween you and me and the bed-post, I seed Muster Frazer a-talking secretly with Tom, two or three times, mayhap four times, in the dusk of the evening, down Blind Man's-lane—an out-of-the-way place, as you perhaps may know. But I have my own reasons for daundering about there lateish of an evening "sometimes. Tom, who is a bit of a scholard, you must know," added the garrulous old man, "and can read writing very well, received several letters by post whilst he was stopping with us. They was directed in a scrawly sort of hand, and the spelling bad, my wife said—and she can read writing as well as Tom, if not better."

"Have another pint and a fresh pipe." Tomlinson had not the slightest objection to that; and when, after he had taken the lining, or nearly so, out of both pint and pipe, I asked if I might see Tom Sawkins' "crib" more closely—search it, in short—the ancient marine offered no objection.

"It's all in a litter," he added; "just as Tom left it; for my wife has been laid up with the rheumatics ever since, and it aint likely—no lodger

calling to ask about it—that I should put myself out of the way to tidy it up.”

“Certainly not. Absurd to think of such a thing! Let us go then at once. I am pressed for time, having several letters to despatch by post; and I cannot walk so fast as before I got this obstinate strain.”

There was a rough deal table in the room, an iron fender, poker, and candlestick—the latter having a remnant of candle sticking in it—and a mean pallet-bed of flock, out of which it seemed that some one had recently tumbled. Nothing more, except a heap of ashes under the rusty grate, and dirt everywhere. Not a scrap of paper was to be seen. I had gained nothing by my visit and outlay at the Horseshoes.

“Rather bare, aint it?” said Tomlinson. “But what can you expect for ninepence a week? Nothing much to be learned here, I reckon,” added he.

As he was speaking, my eye fell upon the iron candlestick, and I noticed that round the end of the remnant of candle a piece of writing-paper was

rolled, to keep, of course, the candle tight in the socket. It might be as well to look at that. So reaching down the rusted stick, I drew the end of candle out, and possessed myself of the piece of paper. Tomlinson was looking out of the window at the moment, and did not observe me. I put the fragment of paper in my pocket, bade Tomlinson good-bye, and went away.

That scrap of paper, so oddly obtained, proved to be invaluable in a moral sense—in a pecuniary one, worth thousands of pounds. It was the torn fragment of a letter, and bore these words (I copy exactly):—"Crown Inn, Copperas Hill, Liverpool. —Wait till I join you. Take the name of Smith ; and say you expect your employer—Mr. Brice, of London. Steamers for America sail at least once a week. Don't be stupid about my giving you the slip ; it isn't my game, you boo——" This was all ; and the writing was unmistakeably that of Frazer. I didn't lose a moment in communicating with the Liverpool police, and quickly ascertained that the two persons described by me, and passing respectively in the names of Smith and Brice, had

embarked for New Orleans, in the steam-ship *Mississippi*, James Austinmaster, just three days after Mr. Frazer left Hampshire.

The trail was effectually struck; but how to make the discovery available for the vindication of Mr. Charles Frodsham's character, for his restoration to society, for the binding up of his mother's bruised spirit, was still the unsolved problem. The treaty of extradition between England and the then United States did not include refractory or unwilling witnesses. The warrant issued by the Hampshire magistrates could not be executed in America—Frazer and Sawkins, if traced to and seized there, would be at once set at liberty by the State authorities. One chance only offered itself. Could it be proved that one or more of the "securities" sold to Mr. Hanbury were forgeries, a warrant to arrest Frazer for that crime, and bring him back to England, would be enforced in any part of America. I forthwith waited upon Mr. Hanbury, explained the motives of my visit, and asked to see the said securities. That gentleman's feelings were so deeply interested for Mrs. Frodsham and her

son, that he did not care one straw if every one was proved to be fictitious—valueless—if the establishment of that fact would help to redeem them from the gulf of despair in which they were plunged. He freely gave them all up to me ; and I left to examine them at my leisure. Several undoubtedly genuine letters of Mr. Musgrave's were given me by Mrs. Frodsham ; and the conclusion I came to, after a long and careful comparison of the writing, was that the "securities" were forged, but that the imitation was first-rate—done by a practised master-hand. Yes ; but my conviction upon the point might not be that of others, and would certainly not suffice to obtain a warrant for the apprehension of Frazer upon so serious a charge.

Carefully considering the matter in all its bearings, I foresaw clearly, from my own stand-point, that those forgeries could only have been committed after Musgrave's death ; and it had by some means come to the knowledge of the forger that a rich legacy had been devised to the murdered man. That, I say, from my stand-point, was clear as day.

Money had not been obtained upon one of them ; nobody had heard that such documents existed whilst Musgrave lived ; yet the latest dated of the papers purported to have *been written full three months previous to Mr. Musgrave's disappearance !* That fact alone would have convinced me that they were all fabrications. As a legal proof, however, I well knew it was not worth a straw.

But the stamps of the promissory notes ! Might not some of them have been issued since the date of those notes ? Very lately it might be—since Mulgrave's death. That fact (if one) was, I knew, easily ascertainable ; the stamps issued having always some, to ordinary observers, undistinguishable mark which fixes the date of their manufacture and issue.

It was a chance worth trying, at all events ; and I forthwith started for London, taking with me the promissory notes ; the I O U's, not being stamped, I returned to Mr. Hanbury.

As I hoped, yet hardly dared to hope, four of the promissory notes were written upon stamped

paper which had not been issued till several days *after* Musgrave's death !

The proof of forgery could not be more complete. The necessary formalities were gone through with, I had in my hand a warrant for the apprehension of Frazer, and official directions to the consular authorities of Great Britain to aid me in claiming the custody of his person, under the Extradition Act. Tom Sawkins, if found, I should have to deal with after another fashion.

Mrs. Frodsham had been purposely kept ignorant of what was going on—in fact, my sole confidant was Mr. Hanbury himself—till our preparations were complete, and I was ready to start for the States. The surprise to her was great, the resuscitation of hope for a time overpowering. Her thanks to, her confidence in me found tearful, broken expression ; and when—emboldened by her matronly smile, in which were, however, some sparkles of the light of girlish archness, I fancied, to be seen—I ventured to raise her fingers to my lips, I felt quite as determined to do my devoir to the death as ever did mailed knight who entered

the lists in the old horse-prancing, lance-in-rest, much-betrumpeted days of chivalry, so-called. Ay, and the peril I should have to confront in hunting up a couple of desperadoes in the land of six-shooters and bowie-knives was, I quite well knew, a hundred times greater than was dared by any preux chevalier that ever set lance in rest.

The Crescent City, as New Orleans is sometimes called, is a fair average specimen of the great cities which dot the Atlantic seaboard of America—with the exception of reckless ruffianism, in which characteristic its rowdy population certainly bears away the palm.

It was among the haunts of the most reckless of those ruffians, gamblers (or sportsmen, as they are named) swillers of gin-sling, cocktail, &c.—ever ready to avenge a loss, or what in their normal mood of drunken savagery they may deem an insult, by shooting the offender down with a revolver, or stabbing him under the fifth rib with a bowie-knife, with almost certain impunity, or, at the worst, the incurrance of a very slight punishment—

that I knew, from reliable sources of information, I should find Frazer, if anywhere. The scoundrel's real name, by-the-bye, was Jones; but I may as well continue to speak of him as Frazer. To be sure, I should be entitled to the assistance of the New Orleans police in effecting his capture; but although, judging from my own experience, the superior authorities loyally endeavoured to carry out the provisions of the Extradition Treaty, the men upon whose active co-operation an English police-officer must depend in such cases were very lukewarm in aiding a Britisher to seize and carry off the vilest villain who had sought refuge beneath the star-spangled banner, or the Palmetto flag now, I suppose, as the case may be.

Very strangely, it happened, immediately after I disembarked at one of the levées of New Orleans, I, entering a crowded bar for a nip of brandy—my stomach not having quite regained its constancy after the long sea voyage—caught sight of my gentleman, amongst a knot of sinister-looking rowdies, fiercely quarrelling with each other about some card winnings or losings.

I had no proper authority to seize him—not, of course, having been able to communicate with the authorities—and, without the assistance of the New Orleans police, to have attempted to do so would have been sheer madness. It was, however, satisfactory to have so early struck upon one of the fellow's haunts. It was, at the same time, especially desirable that he should not be aware I had done so, and I drew back out of sight—*his* sight—immediately, and left with all speed.

The British consul was fortunately at home when I called the first time; and, with his assistance, I quickly obtained the necessary legal authorization to arrest Frazer, lodge him in jail, and, if it were found, after proper investigation, that he came within the provisions of the Extradition Treaty, he would be given over into my custody, and we should leave for England together.

Half-a-dozen of the New Orleans police accompanied me forthwith to the liquor-store where I had seen Frazer about three hours previously. The bird had flown! and no one there—though several of the men were those with whom I had

seen him furiously quarrelling—recollected, knew anything about such a person as we described. The barkeeper did not think he had ever seen such a man ; and many stoutly swore there had been no row in the place that day about card-playing, or anything else. It must have been some other liquor-store the British detective had gone into, *etcetera*.

No doubt we had stumbled stupidly upon the very threshold of our enterprise. That, however, was not my fault. The moment I saw Frazer had left, I earnestly whispered the chief of the American police to say nothing of our errand there. The supercilious Southerner replied that he did not require to be taught his business by me, and immediately began making loud and affectedly fierce inquiry after an Englishman we were in quest of, accused of having committed forgery in the old country. His name was Frazer, but he now went, it was believed, by that of Brice. If this had not been, as I had afterwards excellent reason to believe, malignant spitefulness, it would have been the sheerest stupidity. The officer did

more, he thought, to thwart the Britisher he was directed to aid, by causing a paragraph to be inserted in next day's *Picayune* newspaper, which told the New Orleans world that "Clarke, an English detective officer, had arrived with a warrant to arrest another Englishman, one Frazer or Brice, accused of forgery, and take him back to England under the provisions of the Extradition Treaty, a measure which the United States Senate ought never to have sanctioned."

This was superfluous spite on the part of my worthy American comrade. Frazer would have known all about my arrival and errand at New Orleans from his friends at the liquor store long before the *Picayune* was published. My chances of conveying Frazer back to Hampshire were wofully diminished by the officer's conduct, and my heart sank within me as the consequences of my failure to Mrs. Frodsham, her son, ay, and that blithe-looking groom, reappeared before my mind's eye in all their original horror. But I would persevere to the last with the persistent patience, if not the unerring scent of a sleuth hound, till

all hope of success had utterly vanished. The idea of appearing before Mrs. Frodsham with her death-warrant in my hand, which I felt sure the intelligence that I was unable to save her son from shame would be, distressed, tortured me beyond belief. Of course, the feeling of personal pride, to be intensely mortified if I failed, as greatly gratified if I succeeded, contributed its full share to that emotion. By the way, I have omitted to mention in its proper place that Mrs. Frodsham admitted to me, that in accordance with the suggestion of booby-brained B——, her attorney, she had not only induced Mr. Hanbury to purchase the fictitious securities of Frazer, but had herself given him a bribe of one thousand pounds to go and keep out of the way. And this would be the serpent-sting—that by so acting, though with tenderest solicitude of intention, and in compliance with counsel which she had a right to believe was sound, she would, if I did not succeed in capturing Frazer, have herself been instrumental in rendering her son's vindication, his return to society impossible.

The *Picayune* paragraph had quite an opposite effect to that it was intended to produce. It brought me a very important visitor, who would not else have heard I was in New Orleans.

This visitor was my mother's brother ; he who, as related in the first chapter of this book, would have robbed her by violence of her stern husband's marital gift but for the interposition of Watson whom I afterwards assisted in escaping to America. He was waiting for me at the Saint Louis Hotel when I returned there in the evening of the day following that on which the paragraph appeared, weary, fretful with fatigue and disappointment. Smith, as I named him in that paper, though aged, his scant hair white as snow, and his face blotchy with intemperance, seemed to be in possession of strong health. Originally he must have possessed an iron constitution. "I saw your name in the paper," said he, "and thought you would not object to shake hands with your mother's brother. No; I am not much changed for the better since I left the cursed old country—not at all, I think.

The chains of evil habit are seldom effectually broken, especially when the devil has so strongly forged them as he did mine. But I am not going to whine or drivel. I am doing tolerably well here—middling, I mean; and should do much better if I could raise a thousand dollars within about a fortnight. I keep a liquor-store, and with what I should be able to sell that for and a thousand dollars I could purchase a first-rate one. I thought perhaps you might loan me such a sum,” added he, with his old brazen impudence of tone and look.

“A foolish thought, Mr. Smith. I have no thousand dollars to lend.”

“For all that, I reckon to have them out of you, if what I hear about the man you are come after is correct. He has got an awful lot of plunder I am told.”

“Do you know him then?”

“No, not particularly. He has only been once or twice at my store. It aint grand enough for such swells as he. But I know them that *do* know him, though he’s now hid away for fear of you, who could find out within twenty-four hours—it must

be done quickly, or it wont be done at all—where he is to be nabbed. One of my acquaintance was at the liquor store where you first saw Frazer *alias* Brice, as you and the newspaper call him. He goes by another name here. But I shouldn't have known that the detective sent after him was my nephew Clarke—I've heard of you many times since I left England—had not the *Picayune* told me."

"You are quite serious that you can enable me to effect his capture?"

"Serious! I should think so. That is, if a thousand dollars for myself can be made square."

"In the event of success, of course?"

"To be sure; no cure no pay is fair trading. Another thing: my 'acquaintance' wont expect to work for nothing; but his figure shall be a very moderate one, I'll take care."

"I close with your terms at once. Frazer once safely lodged in jail, the thousand dollars shall be immediately handed over to you; and I shall not object to any reasonable sum in addition for your 'acquaintance.'"

“It is all settled then, *upon honour*. Now then I will tell you what has been done already. I called yesterday twice to see you; once before to-day. You were out, and I did not choose to leave my name; I should be sure to happen with you very soon. So I, feeling sure we should come to terms—for without me you would no more carry off James Rouse to England than the Crescent City itself——”

“James Rouse!”

“Yes; that is his New Orleans *alias*. Feeling sure, I say, we should come to terms, I set to work at once; and the fact is, Rouse must be taken this very night, if at all!

“Taken this very night! He starts with about a dozen ‘sportsmen,’ at about four o’clock in the morning, westwards. They go in cars—to what place in particular is not, I think, exactly decided. One thing is, in my opinion, pretty clear—that Rouse himself wont go very far. The sporting gentlemen know he carries an enormous lot of dollars with him, which they mean to have—by ‘sport’ on the road, if it can be done that way;

if not, by a six-shooter. A grave can be easily found in the swamps, which no one could ever spy into. He, in his fright and hurry to get away from you and the police here, is going to jump out of the fryingpan into the fire with a vengeance."

"So it should seem. Well, what is the plan of action? Must we take a sufficient force to seize him, spite of the desperate resistance which his sportsmen escort are sure to offer?"

"No occasion for that, I hope. He sleeps to-night, for the last time, at a house of ill-fame in the French quarter of the city. More correctly speaking, his constant companion, Miles——"

"His constant companion, Miles! Is *he* a sportsman?"

"No; he is an Englishman—of almost the lowest class, I should say, by his manners and conversation. He came over in the same vessel with Rouse—or Frazer."

"Tom Sawkins, possibly; but he I do not think was with Frazer when I saw him at the liquor store on the Levée. Frazer was, I

could be almost sworn, the only Englishman present."

"Perhaps so. A man may be the close companion of another without being precisely his shadow. Returning to the plan of action. Mr. Frazer will pass the night at a house of ill-fame in the French quarter of the town. By which I mean, he will remain up playing cards till it is time to be off. A rich pigeon just caught is to be plucked. The play will be very high—the players Mr. James Rouse, the pigeon, a young and very green Virginian, and two 'sportsmen.' These last will be there as much to keep guard over Rouse—to prevent him from giving *them* the slip, as they intend he shall you,—as to participate in the anticipated plunder. In fact, it was for the purpose of not losing sight of Rouse that it was arranged the play should take place at the house of ill-fame—Rouse's lodging. One moment! Well thought of. Should Miles be the man you thought he might be, does he know you?"

"He never saw me in his life!"

"That is well, because he will be on the look-out

to give instant warning of your approach, or that of any other suspicious person ; and one minute's notice would quite suffice, so peculiarly fitted for affording such facility are the houses in one of which our little game must be played out to-night. It is essential, too, that but you, I, and 'my acquaintance' should be the only players in that game, on our side ; one reason being the great risk there would be that if a New Orleans police officer were to present himself within a hundred yards of the house, the birds would be flown before you could say Jack Robinson : another, that one or more friends of the 'sportsmen' would be sure to hear, if the police were requested to act with you, that something was in the wind. Hawks, they say in the old country, wont pick out hawks' eyes ; and I am quite sure a genuine son of Columbia will never willingly help to seize and deliver up to a Britisher any one, though born in Britain, who claims the almighty protection of Uncle Sam. Of course, you have obtained legal authorization to yourself arrest Rouse or Frazer, if you happen to meet with him ?"

“Certainly; the condition being that I immediately, or as quickly as may be, deliver him over to the American authorities—that is to say, lodge him in jail.”

“Just so. Well, we shall be three to three, perhaps three to four; as Miles will probably be in the room before it may be prudent to act.”

“Three to four desperate ruffians: those four well armed, no doubt. You too, Mr. Smith, though the island blood appears to flame as fiercely as ever in your veins——”

“D—n the island blood. I am a naturalized citizen of this great Republic.”

“As you please. I was about to remark that you are not so young, nor, I should suppose, quite so vigorous and active as you once were. Still, I am quite willing to run the hazard. I have faced greater odds, and in cases which comparatively very little interested me.”

“The *surprise*, as I shall manage it, will help us much. The pigeon, of course, counts on neither side. Well, I am certainly older than I was twenty years ago, but I could spar a bit once

upon a time; and, with help of these pretty knuckle-dusters, shall be able, I have no doubt, to give at least one of the gentlemen-sportsmen a floorer, before he quite knows whether it is the roof of the house or his own skull that has suddenly cracked in. We must go singly to the house. You can follow me at a distance. There is a billiard-room, where you can lounge till the signal strikes, as I don't suppose you will much affect the lady-society you may meet with. I will look in again about ten o'clock. Good-bye till then. I think I ought to have stipulated for fifteen hundred dollars at least! But a bargain is a bargain all the world over. Once more, good-bye, for a couple of hours."

The house was full of gay company of both sexes; but nothing absolutely indecorous was observable. Music, singing, riotous laughter rang through the place *fortissimo* when one or more doors were occasionally opened. The billiard-room, in which I sat, sipping lemonade, and seemingly very attentive to the game, was pretty full; and I, wrapped in my cloak, with the collar

up—it was winter, and bitterly cold—was unnoticed, save by my uncle, who glided from time to time in and out.

“All is going well,” he more than once whispered. “The pigeon, my acquaintance reports, is being unmercifully plucked, and the confederates are in high good humour.”

Gradually, after midnight, the house grew quiet. The billiard-room thinned ; the gas was here and there extinguished ; chamber-doors were locked and bolted ; and I knew the time for decisive action was close at hand.

I had a loaded revolver in my breast-pocket ; but the only weapon I intended to use, unless driven to extremity, was a life-preserver : a more effective arm, wielded by skilful hands, in a close encounter, does not exist. Besides, it was of the last importance that as little noise as possible should be made in securing and carrying off Frazer.

It was just upon the stroke of two, and I was getting feverishly impatient, when my uncle, whom I had not seen for an hour previously, came softly into the then empty, though still lighted,

billiard-room, accompanied by his "acquaintance," a resolute-looking youngish man, whose name was never confided to me. This was a condition insisted on by himself. Why, would have been a mystery to me but that I concluded he was not personally known to the two sportsmen or the pigeon. He was "the friend" of Frazer, and had the *entrée* of the room where the plucking was going so bravely on.

"It is time," said he. "Are you quite ready, Mr. Detective?"

"Quite ready; lead on."

"Miles is in the room, and restless, watchful, uneasy; I know not why. How is the assault, which must be sudden as lightning, to be made? Any considerable uproar, the discharge of a pistol, would probably bring overpowering odds against us. But that I have a wrong of my own to revenge upon that cowardly Rouse, I certainly should not have engaged in such a business. Still, being in, I shall go on. How is the assault to be made? Whom do you propose to assail, Mr. Britisher?"

"Helped by the surprise, I can manage the two Englishmen. Frazer, for all his bounce, is, I

believe, a cowardly caitiff, I undertake for those two."

"I for one sportsman," said my uncle, "the one nearest the door; you for the other, being nimbler than I."

"Agreed. Now then!"

"Have you almost done, gentlemen?" said the acquaintance, partially opening the door, after softly tapping in a peculiar manner; "*I am off home.*"

"Not quite; about half an hour, perhaps," replied, or was replying, Frazer, when the door was flung wide, and we were upon them.

Miles was upon his feet, and might have offered resistance but for a blow of the life-preserver, which floored him as a butcher fells an ox.

"Frazer," said I, seizing the astounded wretch by the throat, "no noise, no foolish resistance. The game is up."

My friends had been equally successful. Uncle's knuckle-duster settled one; the uplifted bowie-knife of his acquaintance the other.

The pigeon looked on in silent astonishment and consternation.

Miles, who I felt sure in my own mind was Tom Sawkins, was sufficiently revived by a good dousing of cold water to stand upon his legs, though somewhat giddily ; the same with the knuckle-dusted gentleman.

“ A mere matter of precaution, gentlemen,” said I, fastening their wrists with iron cuffs in as courteous a manner as possible : “ a mere matter of precaution, gentlemen-sportsmen. As soon as we are at a sufficient distance from this house, you, not being our game, will be set free. But no noise. Mind that ! You, sir,” I added, speaking to the green Virginian, “ had better call to-morrow at the St. Louis Hotel, and ask for Mr. Clarke. It may be possible to restore to you some of the plunder of which you have been robbed to-night.”

“ The reckoning is all paid,” said my gleeful uncle ; “ and everything, as you see, snugly packed up. We may leave the two large portmanteaus till daylight to-morrow. But I recommend you,” he added, aside to me, “ to take possession at once of this small, well-secured valise. I can carry it.”

I nodded assent ; and forth we silently sallied.

Cloaks concealed the handcuffs from the observation of the negro door-porter, who had, moreover, been warned that the gentlemen in No. 37 would leave during the night. The game had been so far successfully played; and I felt quite sure of winning not only the odd trick, but scoring all the honours.

At the jail I took a receipt for Frazer *alias* Brice *alias* Rouse; and, after searching him, the official there handed me a memorandum of the moneys and papers found on his person.

"Is this man to be detained?" asked the officer, pointing to Miles.

"Yes; his real name is Sawkins—Tom Sawkins."

"That is right, I reckon," said the officer, laughing.

Miles—who had been fast regaining composure and confidence from the telegraphic looks of Frazer—sprung round upon me, as if I had suddenly pricked him with a red-hot iron, and his phiz turning in an instant to a cadaverous tint.

"What is he charged with?"

"Wilful murder."

“Wilful murder!” screamed the fellow, again turning towards and questioning Frazer with his eyes. “Why, good God!——”

Frazer’s finger, instantly placed upon his lip—the handcuffs had been taken off—checked Sawkins’s tongue. He was silent, and stared round bewilderedly; not at all, it was plain, relishing the position in which he found himself. I had taken the precaution to obtain (through the British consul) legal authority to arrest Thomas Sawkins, suspected of wilful murder; *pro tem*. I being, of course, answerable for any wrong done to the supposed culprit. That contingency did not trouble me much when I was satisfied that I had got the right man in the right place.

Smith, my uncle, was waiting for me and his thousand dollars at the hotel. I handed them over to him, and after having plentifully liquored, he went away in high feather. I then took the liberty of examining the valise brought away by Smith. It contained a very large sum of money in readily negotiable securities; but nothing

bearing on the charge against him — nothing criminatory. On the contrary, three letters, dated not long before Mr. Musgrave's disappearance, showed that that gentleman was on very intimate terms indeed with Frazer. Still, the silent evidence of the stamps was irresistible; would be so esteemed, at all events, by an English court; but would the American judge, before whom Frazer must appear before being deported, hold such evidence sufficient? It would be urged, no doubt, that English stamp-manufacturers were not infallible; and that, at all events, *viva voce* evidence of the makers and issuers of the stamps should be produced, not merely cut-and-dried affidavits which could not be cross-examined, before the prisoner was shipped off to England!

With such thoughts ringing through my head, I could not but be extremely pleased at a message which reached me the next day from Sawkins. He was desirous of making a statement. I hastened to the jail, found him in a state of great trepidation, which I certainly did nothing to allay, and he then

made an astounding declaration, of which the material substance was, that neither Mr. Musgrave nor any one else had been murdered ! That the whole thing was concocted by Frazer, to obtain money—he being in desperate circumstances. He had led Sawkins on, by little and little, to help him. Sawkins had received the two shirts, borrowed by his master at the Crown Inn, Andover, to return them to Mr. Frodsham's servant ; and that, he being present at the time, first put the idea into Frazer's head — so, at least, Sawkins thought. The body of a young man, recently buried in a near village churchyard, which it was thought would well answer the purpose, was exhumed during a dark night, carted off to Burnsley Coppice. The face and skull having been smashed in, the corpse was re clothed in habiliments that had been worn by Mr. Musgrave and given to Sawkins ; but as these were of ordinary colour and fashion, greater reliance was placed upon the shirt to satisfy the coroner that the body was that of Mr. Musgrave—" who, at this blessed moment, is alive and well, or was not very long ago, at Montreal, Canada," said Sawkins ;

adding, "Neither I nor Mr. Fraze is so bad—though bad enough, God knows—as you may think we are. There would have been a letter sent off to England in good time to prevent Mr. Frodsham and poor Major from being convicted; stating that Mr. Musgrave was alive, and where he was to be found. Frazer said Mr. Musgrave would see all about the affair in the English papers, and go over himself to England; but I didn't mean to trust to that."

This declaration was carefully committed to paper, and sworn to before the proper authority by the deponent Sawkins. Armed with it, I no longer feared that the New Orleans authorities would liberate Frazer. He himself, after hearing that Sawkins had made a clean breast of it, thought so too; and sullenly, resigned himself to his fate. We—myself, Frazer, and Sawkins—sailed for England in the *General Jackson* steamer, bound for Liverpool—I having previously written to Montreal, forwarding newspapers by same post, acquainting Mr. Musgrave with the exact state of

affairs, and urging the expediency of his immediate embarkation for England.

He reached Hampshire just two days after I did, accompanied by Sawkins. Frazer died during the passage home (I believe by poison); but there was no *post-mortem* examination—a hurricane was raging at the time, and the body was hurriedly consigned to the deep. I need not dwell upon the sudden restoration from death to life, as it were, of Mrs. Frodsham—of her son; the general joy which the astounding intelligence, running through the county like wild-fire, occasioned; whilst as to my wonderful self—I was a heaven-born detective, and no mistake.

Charles Frodsham and John Major, again taken by *habeas corpus* before a judge in London, were admitted at once to merely nominal bail. Of course, no bill was preferred against either at the assizes; and the verdict of the coroner's inquisition upon the supposed dead body of Edmund Musgrave was formally quashed by the Court of Queen's Bench. This complicated drama—which made but little

noise, comparatively speaking, even in Hampshire; there appearing to be a reluctance, out of respect to the family implicated, to indulge in much comment—fitly concluded with the marriage, on the same day, of Mr. Charles Frodsham and Miss Annesley, Mr. Hanbury and Mrs. Frodsham, which I did *not* remain to witness.

LOST UPON DARTMOOR.

THE thickly-scribbled pages of my note-book record no more pleasant reminiscence than that which I am now about to transcribe.

I was spending a few days in delightful Devonshire for the recruitment of my health, when, being something of a botanist, the fancy seized me of visiting Dartmoor, and passing a few hours in the examination of its peculiar Flora. I did pass a very pleasant day there, and scarcely felt the fatigue, the exhaustion, which eager rambling here and there during seven or eight hours must have caused; forgetting, too, that the far-stretching wilderness was unknown to me; that, except in broad daylight, the faint foot-tracks which cross it leading to and from the habitations of man could not be discerned. The summer day had, moreover, been unusually warm, and at about five in the evening I—having eaten

heartily, drunk a quart of strong bottled ale—felt, and no wonder, as I lay upon the grass, an irresistible drowsiness steal over me. Ah, well, there would be at that season of the year four hours of daylight; I might indulge, therefore, in a short nap, just half-an-hour; I should awake at the mentally-determined time, as I had done in scores of instances before; and, refreshed with sleep, should reach home in three hours at the most. Man proposes, God disposes; and I sometimes think—I confess to being somewhat superstitious (who that has gone to and fro upon the face of the earth, and witnessed the moral marvels constantly occurring in its daily life, is not more or less so?)—I sometimes think—that the want of caution on my part, in permitting myself to go to sleep on a wild, trackless moor at five in the evening, after a day of such exhaustive, however pleasurable, exertion, was supernaturally inspired. That may be a foolish fancy. The unquestionable fact was, that the half-hour I had allowed myself expanded to at least ten half-hours; and that when I awoke and recognised, not without difficulty, where I was and how I came there, it was pitch-dark, and a damp, raw

air, the wind having no doubt changed, was, though the month was August, chilling the genial current of my blood. I roused myself resolutely, got up, felt, instead of rested very much stiffened by slumber, and thought of the three hours' walk before me with something like dismay, especially when conscious, as I presently was, that a cold, drizzling rain had set in, and that, owing to the darkness, I knew no more in what direction to proceed than if I had been a blind man suddenly abandoned in a strange place. I had heard often of persons having been lost upon Dartmoor, and who had perished there ; but they were feeble creatures, mostly women and children—and the season was winter. Snow-storms obliterating the pathways would render it almost impossible for strangers to find their way across the bleak moor, untenanted save by sheep, with here and there a shepherd snowed up in his miserable hut. I was in no such peril. Still to pass six or seven night hours beneath that chill and faster, faster, falling rain would be exceedingly unpleasant, and remembering that a river always runs towards the abode

of men, I sought to find the banks of the Dart. It is wonderful how sound deceives as to the direction from which it reaches you. I am told that for that reason alarm-bells intended to warn the crews of vessels that they are running upon rocks have been long since discontinued. However that may be, this I know, that although after about an hour's wanderings, I managed to get within hearing of the ripple of the Dart, I could not for the life of me gain its bank. It was here, it was there; and, at last, after long, fruitless exertion, I ran my angry head against a shepherd's hut. The blow was rather a severe one, for I was pursuing that dodging, rascally river as if it were a felon striving to avoid my clutch, and gifted with ventriloquist power, by the aid of which, in the darkness, he mockingly baffled my efforts. Very stupid, no doubt; but a miserable man, benighted in a drenching rain upon an unescapable moor, may be forgiven a little foggy bewilderment. A very thirsty man moreover, and getting hungry. True there was water everywhere; never were drunkards' brains so soaked with liquid as were my habili-

ments, but not a drop to drink, though I held my wide-opened mouth up to catch the rain. The mouth was a part of the animal economy which it passed slantingly by. I was intensely savage. There was another quart bottle of prime Devonshire ale somewhere upon that confounded moor, also delicious sandwiches ; but where ? That was the question, not resolvable by me ; though scarcely five minutes after I woke and started off home, as I thought, it occurred to me that the possession of the bottle of ale, the sandwiches did not so much signify, would be very desirable. I turned to find it. Find it ! find a needle in a truss of hay as easily. The devil fly away with Dartmoor. It was the first time and would be the last time that I went botanising thereon. The reader can now in some degree realize to him or herself the sweet temper I was in when my head butted against the shepherd's hut.

The blow was, in a certain sense, a sobering one. Would it not, I reflected, be wiser to get and keep under shelter till day dawned, instead of blundering about, now this, now that way, as I had

been doing. Of course it would. So I felt along the wooden paling of the hut, till I came to the opening, called, I suppose, the doorway, though door there was none, and never had been. It proved to be one of the better sort of huts, having two rooms; the inner one used as a bedchamber. There was a wooden partition dividing the two, through a wide crevice in which faintly streamed the light of a lamp or candle. Groping my way onward, I presently found myself in the inner room. It was untenanted; the light was that of a rush candle nearly burnt out; and in one corner was a heap of straw, upon which was spread a coarse coverlet. There was a rude settle or stool, upon which I sat down, thankful to be under cover, and decided to stay there till day-dawn. I looked at my watch by the flickering rushlight, and saw that it was ten minutes past eleven. A quarter of an hour passed, the rushlight expired, and I, though miserably damp and uncomfortable, was dozing off, when the sound of approaching steps and voices awakened me. I listened attentively, perhaps in some degree anxiously, the place

being so solitary, and it being well known that prisoners confined in Dartmoor prison, the very worst class of criminals, not unfrequently escaped, and in two well-established instances had murdered shepherds—not perhaps solely to possess themselves of such scanty sustenance as the huts contained, but to avoid the possibility of information of their escape being given to the authorities in time to commence successful pursuit.

The approaching voices were gruff, stern—three men's voices, at least ; one was that of a woman ; and I heard, or fancied that I did, the wailing sobs of a child. I felt for my pistols, which from habit I never was without ; ascertained that the oilskin sheathing protecting the powder from wet had not slipped off ; and watchfully waited the coming in of the party.

I had not many minutes to wait. Four men, a woman, and a girl, entered the hut ; and, by the strong light of a lantern carried by one of the men, I was enabled to view their features distinctly, through the crevice in the partition.

'Scape-gallows ruffians were three, if not all four

of the men ; brawny, powerful fellows too. The woman was as evidently a brazen, somewhat showy-looking harlot, about thirty years of age. The girl—one of the prettiest, most interesting I have ever seen, who could not have been at the most more than twelve summers—was as certainly the child of luxury ; her frock, and dress generally were of the finest material, and made up in the newest fashion for young ladies of her age. How piteously pale she was ! what a world of terror fluttered in those suffused, sweet, supplicating, soft blue eyes ! Instinctively my hand crept as it were to the handle of one of my pistols, and slipped off its oil casing. I had four barrels ; each, unless my nerve failed me, carried a life. There was, would be, work to be done—work for me to do ; and by heaven I would do it !”

Let not the reader imagine that it required any amount of Rinaldo courage to arrive at such a determination. There is scarcely a police-officer in the kingdom who would not have so resolved without thinking for a moment that he was preparing to perform any highly heroic action. The truth is,

that the abiding consciousness of having the "law" on your side, together with the indifference to danger which familiarity with it engenders, begets a kind of mechanical courage—perhaps mechanical is not exactly the proper word, but I cannot for the moment think of one more appropriate—engenders, begets, I was saying, a sort of mechanical courage, which quails not before any ordinary—no, nor extraordinary—peril.

"Here we be, then," growled a bullet-headed ruffian, he who carried the lantern; "and now, after a sup and a bite, we'll go to business. The night's wearing on, and there's no time, not a precious moment, to be lost. The candle's out, I see, in your room. Don't keep on whimpering, Miss Dalton," he added, darting a ferocious look at the terrified, dumb-stricken young girl. "We shan't hurt ye, if we can make sure as you will never give tongue against us; but if not—why then, *why* not?"

"You ain't going, Bill Waters, to harm the young lady," said the woman. "I'll see your coffin

walk before you hurt the hair of her head. That was the bargain, and you shall stick to it."

"Shut that tater-trap," replied Bill Waters; "nobody wants to hurt the gal, if so be there's no 'casion for it. Now, then, get out the stuff."

"Get out the stuff yourselves. I shall light a fire to warm Miss Dalton, and dry her things."

So speaking, the woman took shavings and wood from a corner cupboard, and made haste to kindle a fire. The men at the same time took the "stuff" (brandy) and cold meat and bread from the same receptacle, and set to work voraciously.

What could be the true significance of that strange scene? Who were those men? Why had they brought that fair girl to such a lonely, desolate place? To murder her? That could hardly be their intention—their primary intention, at all events. It would have been easy enough to have disposed of her on the wild, desert moor. Perhaps I should learn when their hunger and thirst were appeased. Meanwhile, I held a half-cocked double-barreled pistol in each of my hands. Long practice had enabled me to shoot almost as truly

with the left as the right ; and any attempt to harm her would, swift as lightning, bring a champion to the rescue, though she knew it not. I felt very proud at that moment, I well remember, and totally forgot I was wet through to the skin.

The woman had kindled a good fire, and had drawn a stool close to it, upon which she placed Miss Dalton, rubbed her hands, and strove by soothing words to comfort the trembling captive. She strove in vain. The unfortunate girl did not appear to hear what she said ; but sat motionless, the incarnation of helpless, hopeless dismay and horror.

It was hard to resist that silent, piteous appeal ; to refrain from rushing upon the ruffians as they sat swilling and stuffing, and so end the affair at once. Yes ; but to so end it I must use my pistols—send a bullet through the heads of two of the men, at least—and that would hardly be justifiable till a murderous intent became more positively apparent.

Ha ! they begin to talk ; their tongues, loosened by drink, wag freely, though in undertones. I listen with both my ears, and heard a story which, in its seeming unreality, resembled the fictions of

the *Family Herald*. There are many gaps in the narrative ; but the main facts piece themselves out with sufficient clearness.

Madame Dalton, as they called the lady, was a wealthy widow, who resided at the Willows, a noble mansion—which I had seen—situate about three miles from Exeter. She had one child, Rosalind,—the fair girl cowering there in speechless terror—and the mother's idol. A Mr. Framley or Frampton (I could not catch the name distinctly, but that was of no consequence)—a Mr. Frampton or Framley having wooed the widow unsuccessfully, had hit on the cruel device of kidnapping the child, and retaining possession of her till Mrs. Dalton should not only consent to, but actually become his wife. The people there were his agents. The reward promised was a large one ; and by the wiles of the woman, who seemed, however, to have some compunctious visitings, the young lady was secretly carried off. This had been effected early the previous evening,—by what precise mode was not mentioned. I did not quite understand either how Mr. Frampton or Framley meant to play out

his game ; nor did the villains in his pay. They appeared to entertain a suspicion that he really meant they should rid him for ever of the rich widow's daughter, he having children of his own. And the suborned rascals had a game of *their* own. The woman—"Nance," they called her—would not, they seemed to be convinced, permit any violence to be done to the child ; and, Frampton once married to Mrs. Dalton, they feared the promised reward might not be forthcoming unless they completed their work. Would it not be better, therefore, to open negotiations on their own account with Mrs Dalton?

As they talked and talked, I fancied, was indeed sure, that I heard the sounds of a horse's hoofs approaching the hut. One of the men evidently thought so too ; he pricked up his ears, hearkened eagerly, and the sounds ceasing, stepped forth and peered into the thick night. Only darkness there. This was the man whom Nance called Bill Waters. He appeared to be the leading ruffian.

"I thought I heard his horse's hoofs," said Bill Waters ; "but I suppose it must have been the

pattering of the rain. He wont be here to-night. Well, I hardly thought he would. He's a slippery cove, he is, depend upon it; and desperate hard-up, I'm told. Yes, mates, we shall do better by treating with the lady ourselves."

They then resumed the interrupted conversation, and discussed quite loudly the likeliest mode of turning the possession of the stolen girl to the best account for themselves. Frampton should, it was finally determined, be flung overboard. Worse than that. Terms made with the wealthy widow, they would squeeze him as dry as a biscuit; make him shell out every sovereign he could rake together by hook or crook, as the price of their silence anent his share in the abduction of the young lady — who had, meanwhile, overcome with fatigue, and soothed perhaps by the crooning, low-voiced lullabies of Nance (Ann Thomas was her name), fallen fast asleep in the woman's arms.

There was not anything more of importance to be learned by continuing to listen to their conversation, and strongly suspecting that Frampton had

really arrived—that those were his horse's hoofs which I had heard striking dully upon the rain-softened moor-turf—I crept softly out, by an aperture opening upon the bleak waste, from the inner room. It still rained hard; but the night was lighter. A few stars, now seen, now gone—for the wind had risen—showed themselves; and my eyes, presently accustomed to the gloom, could discover the outline of large objects at a considerable distance off. By Jove! I was right. A horse was fastened by the bridle to a corner-post connected with the hut itself by a horizontally-placed pole—forming one side of a quadrangle, intended, perhaps, to be one day cultivated by the shepherd-tenant. Where then was Frampton hiding himself? I had no doubt it was *his* horse. It was full half-an-hour since he had arrived. I would see where he was; so down I went upon all-fours, and crawled cautiously towards the front opening, where I surmised he was to be found listening to the very interesting conversation going on within the hut. Right again! A tall man, wearing a riding-cloak, was listening just without

the door-way ; that man, it could not be doubted, was Frampton. There would be a scene presently. It were well that I crept quietly back—kept myself ready for any part I might have to play therein.

There was a long lull in the men's conversation ; they had exhausted the topic in which they felt so much interested, but not the "stuff"—which had already so muddled their brains that they would all four be soon heavily asleep. Were it not for the man watching without, and that I could not find my way across the moor, the rescue of Julia Dalton might have been easily, noiselessly effected.

The young girl still slept ; though I was sure, from her frequent nervous starts, that affrighting images pursued her in that sleep.

But a short time passed ; and then ostentatious, heavy steps approached the entrance, and in came Mr. Frampton, with a heavy riding-whip in his hand.

"Hillo ! you drunken rascals ! Fast asleep, eh ? or nearly so !"

Bill Waters jumped up, and muttered something to the effect that they had given up expecting him ; but that "it was all right," pointing, as he said so, to the sleeping child.

"Of course it's all right! How could it be otherwise than right, after the instructions I gave you, unless you were the most blundering block-heads that ever breathed? But we wont talk business just now. I shall choose a soft plank (the hut—a very unusual thing—was boarded), and sleep here. It's an infernal night to be out in. Is there any place where I can put my horse under shelter?"

Bill Waters said there was ; and shaking himself fully awake, volunteered to put the animal up. He did so, and presently came back.

"I shall not have more than a couple of hours' snooze. The mare can find her way blindfold out of the moor, which is lucky. "Come," he gaily added, shaking the large liquor-jar, "here's plenty here yet. Fill me a pannikin (they were drinking out of tin cups)—fill me a pannikin, and replenish for yourselves."

The recommendation was cheerfully acquiesced in, and the drinking went on. I noticed that the woman "Nance" obstinately refused to drink, though repeatedly pressed to do so by Frampton. She continued to rock the fitfully slumbering girl; and would, I felt sure, have done fierce battle on her behalf, had occasion required her to do so.

I saw, too, or my eyes deceived me (which is not generally the case), that Frampton, or Framley, dropped something liquid into the men's pannikins. It was very cleverly done, very; and the effect was soon apparent, decided.

The fellows' heads dropped like lumps of lead upon the table. Frampton had hocussed them. Most likely it was laudanum he had administered. There was no necessity for doing so; it would not have been long before the brandy would have itself sealed their senses in forgetfulness.

However, the thing was done. The four men were for a time helpless—dead as logs of wood. Mr. Frampton, assured of that, rose suddenly to his feet, drew a pistol from his pocket, stepped up to "Nance," pointed the weapon at her head, and

said, "Silence; not one word, or I blow your brains out. Make no outcry, no resistance, and you are safe. I have overheard the discourse of those sleeping scoundrels. They mean to betray me. I expected as much: but they will find their match. This girl goes with me; and now ——. Dare to scream or resist," he added fiercely, as the woman half-rose, "and you die upon the spot. I am a ruined, desperate man. That girl in my power, I shall be able to make my own terms. Her mother would give her life, more than her life, to embrace her. You understand then, that for my own sake, I shall not harm her. But she must go with me. You can tell those sodden scoundrels, when they recover from their drunken debauch, that if they hold their tongues, though I don't greatly care whether they do or don't, I shall keep word with them. Now, young lady, let this woman wrap you up closely, for it rains hard, and it will not be long before you are in your mother's arms. Now, Nance, quick! There must be no delay, and no nonsense!"

Julia Dalton, rudely awakened and still under

the influence of paralyzing terror, appeared scarcely to comprehend what was passing. The woman was terrified into submission, and wrapped her charge round about in her own cloak and shawl. I stole quietly round to the front entrance.

"Now, Miss Dalton," said Framley, "let us begone. Come—come—no screaming! No harm is intended you: but you are in my power, and must submit to my will. In a short time you will call me father. We must ride double; but that will not be for long. Come! Silly fool, *must* I use force? Submit quietly, or by —— Ha!"

The pistol was struck out of his hand, and, disarmed, shaking in every joint of his body, the caitiff confronted me. Never was man more startled—scared!

"Who the devil may you be?" he presently exclaimed, at the same time kicking Bill Waters' shins, in the hope of awakening him.

"I am one Clarke, a detective officer. Will that description suffice? Miss Dalton, you will go home with me. The rain has nearly ceased, and within an hour I shall be able to procure you a more fitting

conveyance than this baffled felon's horse. If you, Frampton, want the mare, which I was glad to hear you say could find her way blindfold out of this miserable moor, you will find her at the Willows. Whether, however, you call there or not, I shall be very angry with myself if I have not you by the heels before many hours have passed. Well thought of. I will take the liberty of helping myself, with your leave, to a nip of brandy; and let me persuade you, Miss Dalton, to take a little diluted spirit. You need it sadly. Ah! I understand. You are not sure that I may be trusted. Fortunately, I can remove your doubts. You must be acquainted with Lady Nugent of the Grange? Her residence is not far from the Willows."

"Yes; oh yes!" faintly responded the sweet, tremulous lips.

"This note then, addressed to me at Exeter, where some one had informed her ladyship I was staying for a time, will satisfy you as to who I really am."

First swallowing a spoonful of brandy-and-water, Julia Dalton glanced at the note. Her eyes bright-

ened immediately, and she held out her hand with artless, winning, infantine confidence.

“I remember all about it, and your name now. You will save me from these cruel men? Let us go.”

Meanwhile Frampton had been glaring at us both with speechless rage. Not one moment, though speaking to Miss Dalton, had I taken my eye off the villain. He understood that look, and dared not stir.

“We will be off immediately, Miss Dalton ; but I must first deprive this amiable gentleman of the means of mischief. The pistol on the floor I take with me of course. You have its fellow about your person, and I must have *that!* Turn out your pockets.”

A ferocious gleam shot from the fellow’s eyes, and he thrust his hand into the breast-pocket of his coat.

“Don’t try that game, Mr. Frampton,” I exclaimed. “You wont have time : indeed you wont. This is a hair trigger which my finger so nearly touches. Withdraw that hand of yours, and

permit me to insert my own. Ah! the fellow-pistol. I thought so. Permit me, moreover, to feel your other pockets. All right. Now, young lady, please to accept my arm. Good-night, Mr. Frampton, or Framley. I shall have the pleasure of again making your acquaintance before long."

The horse was nowhere to be seen—had, no doubt, broken loose. This was terrible. The rain had ceased, but it was still dark as a wolf's mouth, and day would not break for at least four dreary hours; the ruffians before that time had expired might be awakened, and if not beyond their reach, I should have fearful odds to contend with. Well, not such great odds. They had no firearms, neither gun nor pistol, I was pretty sure; and supposing us to be overtaken, or in imminent danger of being overtaken, the very deuce was in it if I could not place myself in a position of vantage which would make the scoundrels think more than twice before they attacked me. Away then with good courage: we should pull through.

Extinguishing the lantern I had borrowed, I,

tightly clutching the trembling girl by the arm, again addressed myself to the task of finding the river. For a long, long time I was unsuccessful as before, but at length I was unmistakeably upon the shelving bank of the Dart. It was time, for Julia Dalton had become almost insensible with fatigue and fear. It was still dark as ever, and I lay down to stretch forth my hand into the stream to feel which way it was running, so that, keeping on the bank, we might follow its course. That point was soon settled; and speaking cheerfully to the jaded, worn-out maiden, I got her slowly along for perhaps half a mile. By then she was utterly exhausted—could go no further. Her stomach rejected the brandy, and there was nothing for it but to sit down on the wet moor and wait for day. And would day bring relief? I feared not, till too late! The next two hours seemed forty, so slowly did they limp away. The sweet, dear child, seated on my knees, moaned brokenly in feverish unrest; and I myself was shivering with cold and wet when the new day, pencilling itself upon the north-east horizon, gave me back strength, courage, life!

Whilst Julia Dalton slept, if physical and mental prostration could be called sleep, I had contrived to pour a little brandy down her throat, and I was in hopes she would soon be sufficiently restored to go on.

The day was broadening. Very soon I should be able to discern foot-tracks across the desolate moor; and I was speaking words of comfort to the sweet maiden, who clung to me so confidently, when loud shouts struck my ear. Frampton, mounted on horseback, and accompanied by his filthy ruffians, had descried us, and counted upon an easy recapture. Fools!

On they came, shouting, gesticulating fiercely. "Give up that girl, you scoundrel," exclaimed Frampton, stopping short when within about twenty paces, "and your rascally self may go free."

"I don't exactly hear, Mr. Frampton. What do you propose? I shan't stand very stiffly out if you promise not to harm the young lady."

"No one ever meant to harm her. Go away," went on Frampton, coming several paces nearer;

“leave her in our hands, and afterwards do your worst. Your answer. Quick!”

“You have it,” said I, raising a pistol, and firing at the instant. The fellow tumbled off his horse with a scream of agony. He was not, however, which I was glad of, killed. The bullet had struck and broken his right jaw, nothing more.

The men stood silently staring at me and each other, their brains still muddled, cloudy with the drugged drink they had swallowed. What, after all, *could they* have done? Rushed upon me? Yes, but two at least in that case would have been sent to kingdom come, and which two being doubtful, was disheartening,”

“I don’t want to shoot you,” I exclaimed, “though I easily could. Catch and hold the mare.”

Bill Waters caught at, and secured the bridle. “Bring her here; I shall not harm you. The others must stand further off. Help me to place the young lady in the saddle.”

The man obeyed, and Miss Dalton was soon comfortably secured in her seat. “That will do;

now look to your own yet unchanged employer. Good morning," and on we went at a smartish pace, I jog-trotting alongside the mare.

We were soon quit of the moor ; medical ministrations were obtained for Julia Dalton, and when I left the village at which we had rested, the restored child was soundly asleep, watched over with beaming eyes by her devoutly-rejoicing, grateful mother. There were no steps taken to bring Frampton to justice, which vexed me.

MURDER UNDER THE MICROSCOPE.

IN a straggling, sandy district known as Stape Hill, not far from Poole, Dorsetshire, there dwelt in 1844, a man not more than forty years of age, if so much, but so bowed, withered by care and disappointment that he looked to be sixty at the very least. His name was Joseph Gibson, and he had once carried on business as an oil and colourman, in the High-street, Islington. He failed in 1843, but managed, by effecting a compromise with his chief creditors, to save about four hundred pounds from the wreck. He had been some years separated from his wife, an attractive woman, by whom he had one pretty, delicate girl at the time of the failure. His own life was wrapped up in that of Catherine; and medical authority warned him that only country air, and that for some years to come, could permanently

establish her health. Whilst earnestly pondering how their future lives could be shaped so as to secure that primary object, his eye hit upon an advertisement in the *Times*, announcing to agriculturists and others that a farm of one hundred acres, partly arable, partly pasture, with convenient dwelling-house, outbuildings, &c., situate at Stape Hill, within easy distance of the flourishing market town of Poole, was to be let on lease, at the low rental of fifty pounds per annum. The stock, implements, &c., were to be taken at a valuation, which would certainly not exceed three hundred pounds, including the growing crops, the season being late in the year ; possession to be given on Michaelmas-day, then ten days distant only. Satisfactory reasons for the throwing-up of so desirable a homestead by the last tenant would be given, and so on, after the manner of such schemes for gulling the unwary. A transparent trap like that could not have imposed upon the least intelligent of practical farmers. He would have known that you might as well have attempted to cultivate seashore sand as arable and pasture land near a

populous English market town, inclusive of a convenient dwelling-house and requisite outbuildings, which the proprietor was willing to let at ten shillings annual rent per acre. But to town folk there is a fascination in the prospect of occupying land which blinds them to the most self-evident facts. Application in person only was to be made to Mr. Arthur Blagden, of Finsbury-square. This gentleman was a solicitor retired from business, and a native of Dorsetshire, in which county he possessed large property, especially in Poole and its vicinity. He was a man of somewhat eccentric habits, and very close, almost penurious, in his expenditure. The Dorsetshire rents he always collected twice a year in person.

The Stape Hill Farm appeared to be precisely suited to Gibson ; it being, the advertisement stated, one of the healthiest places in the United Kingdom, and apparently requiring no more capital than he possessed for adequate cultivation. As to not being himself a practical agriculturist, that deficiency the diligent study of such books as "Farming for the Million," &c., would quickly supply. Joseph

Gibson having so resolved, betook himself to Finsbury-square without delay, saw Mr. Blagden, who, when informed that the applicant really possessed four hundred pounds in cash, readily accepted him as a tenant for Stape Hill Farm, a coloured drawing of which he placed before Gibson, who was so delighted with the picture of rural felicity which it presented that he carried it away to show his child. A lease for fourteen years was to be immediately prepared at the tenant's cost, and on the 28th of September Mr. Blagden would go down with him to Dorsetshire to give possession of the estate and stock.

The preceding tenant, Mr. Blagden candidly informed Gibson, had not prospered at the farm—was, in fact, at that moment a prisoner for debt; but he was an idle, dissolute fellow; encumbered, too, with a large, idle family, and a slatternly wife, who would never do well anywhere. Mr. Blagden had gladly taken the farm and stock off his hands—pleased to be shut of Edward Ridges, even at a considerable sacrifice.

Possession was given.—Joseph Gibson installed

in his rural domain—monarch of all he surveyed; spavined horses; lean and, for the most part, barren cows; a score of decent pigs; and growing crops, such as they were, inclusive. Three labourers (one of them of the name of Somers) on the farm; and Jane Somers (an elderly maid-of-all-work and dairy-woman) were retained. Somers and his wife slept on the premises.

A very short time sufficed to dissipate the fond illusions which the swindled oil and colourman had indulged in. Stape Hill Farm would have consigned any man to a debtor's prison who could not afford to lose at least one hundred pounds per annum upon it. It was a sad awakening from a pleasant dream. His eyes were suddenly opened to the barefaced fraud practised upon him by Mr. Blagden on the very next market-day, in Poole, after that gentleman, having collected his rents, left for London. The poor victim, who zealously falling in at once with market habits, dropped in at the Roebuck—an inn patronised by the bulk of the farmers, to not one of whom he was personally known—had the pleasure of listening to a very

enlightening conversation, carried on in undertone by two or three of the guests. One asked who it was that that cunning devil, Blagden, had let Staple Hill Farm to? To which the reply was:—“A Cockney tailor, or something of the sort, who had got a few hundreds, which the avaricious old leech would soon suck him dry of. He had taken handsome hansel already, by making out that the stock on the place was worth three hundred pounds, and had got the rhino, so at least Jem Somers said—the covetous old hawk’s factotum, sly as his master, and a sweet nut for the devil to crack some day or other.” “Three hundred pounds!” says another; “the unconscionable, thieving skin-flint. Why it was all valleyed to Blagden by poor Ridge’s creditors for a hundred and forty pounds! and money enough too. Ah, well! the London tailor must soon take to his goose again; though he be goose enough himself, for that matter. Well, if folks will meddle with things they don’t understand, they must pay their account with being done uncommon brown, especially if they come in old Blagden’s way.”

This was something like the substance of the conversation, as related to me about a twelvemonth after it occurred, by Nicholas Price, one of the interlocutors ; my business in Poole being to ascertain if any ill-blood had existed between Gibson and Blagden, how engendered, and how hot—inflamed. “Something turned the talk,” Price said, “to other matters ; and about two hours passed—the silent stranger, as he and others noticed, drinking hot brandy-and-water as if it were so much water—when, all in a minute, up the said stranger speaks, says he’s the Cockney tailor they had had been talking about, and wants to know if it was positive true that Blagden was such a swindling blackguard as they made out. ‘If so,’ said the excited stranger, ‘I am a ruined man ! My name is Joseph Gibson. It is I who have taken the Stape Hill Farm ; and if what you have said is true, may God do so to me and more also but I will have the villain’s heart’s-blood before many months have passed !’” Genuine fury, earnest passion always impresses, rebukes men for a time to silence, and no one spoke in answer. Price

and his companions were not desirous that their confidential chat with each other should be made a town-talk of. Everybody disliked Blagden, but few would have chosen to make him their personal enemy. "What I want to know is," continued Gibson, who did not appear to be exactly drunk, though he had really tossed down his throat during those two hours nine shilling glasses of brandy-and-water—his speech, his legs being steady, firm (the devil of drink, as frequently happens, was mastered by the far mightier demon of revengeful rage)—"what I want to know, and will know, is, whether or not the stock and growing crops at Stape Hill Farm were valued to Blagden at one hundred and forty pounds?" This fierce query was replied to by Mr. Phillips, a master harness-maker at Poole, who had before spoken upon the subject. "That is Gospel-truth," said he. "I am one of Ridge's creditors, under the assignment which he made for the benefit of all (though some haven't accepted it), and my name is to the receipt for the one hundred and forty pounds paid by Blagden, just three weeks ago, for the stock

and crops upon them acres of hungry sand which he calls Stape Hill Farm. A precious farm ! It was plenty of money too. Let me advise the gentleman from London," continued Mr. Phillips, in the very words he used, as well as his memory served him, "that if he have given three hundred pounds, as some say he have, for what will not bring in more than a hundred odd, to throw up the place at once, and let first loss be last loss. As for taking Blagden's heart's-blood, that is very wild, foolish talk."

At hearing that, Gibson dropped back into his chair without speaking a word, motioned a person near a bell to ring it, signed to the answering waiter for another glass of brandy-and-water, and sat drinking till he fell, helplessly drunk, upon the floor, and was carried to bed. It was late the next day when he left the Roebuck, and he was never again seen in the house.

Gibson had never been addicted to drink ; and in ordinary circumstances, till of late years, when misfortunes gathering thickly about him cankered his temper as it bowed his form, as it blanched his

hair—had been a man of generally placid demeanour, though capable, when roused, of rushing into the most violent extremes. This I ascertained from his former neighbours in Islington. It must not be forgotten either, that he had set his life—more than his own, his child's life—upon the desperate cast of success in the farming experiment. To play falsely with such a man, in such a mood of mind, was playing with fire.

Somers and his wife managed to pacify him for a time by confident assertions that the land was very fair land, and the stock, properly tended, would realize a profit upon the three hundred pounds. What he had heard at the Roebuck was mere malicious gossip ; nothing more. Thus heartened, Gibson persevered ; working, at such labour as he was fit for, like a slave. He had one prime source of consolation, which could be no deception—Catherine's health improved wonderfully at Stape Hill ; and could he but manage to make both ends meet, he should be well content with his bargain.

That he soon found to be impossible. Wages, manure, horse-keep, his own domestic expenses—

trifling as was the last item—quickly ate up his ridiculously insufficient capital. Stock, half-fattened, was sold at ruinous prices ; and two months before Michaelmas, 1845, he, after looking carefully and boldly into the state of his affairs, was fain to recognise the terrible fact, that he must give up the farm ; and, with scarcely a sovereign in his pocket, return to dingy, stifling London, with his now blooming daughter ; to seek there means of eking out miserable life, and die there ; Catherine soon as he, perhaps sooner. The slightest hint of leaving Stape Hill paled the newly-blown roses on her cheeks, one of the reasons why being that she, on most fine evenings, met “William down at the stile,” the said William being the blithe-looking, well-respected son of a building carpenter and timber-merchant, whose place of business was less than a mile distant from Stape Hill Farm.

Hope, as I have somewhere read, springs eternal in the human breast. That supreme elixir, at all events, welled up rapidly in the fast-failing springs of Joseph Gibson’s life from a very simple fact, daily becoming more certain, plain—namely, that about

forty acres of carrots, which had looked unpromising, would yield a most abundant crop; and carrots were carrots that year. I was told, indeed, when I went down, that carrots, mangold, and such deep striking roots, could alone be grown with a chance of profit in the loose, sandy soil about there.

This success induced Gibson to again go minutely over his accounts, and the result this time was, that if Mr. Blagden could be persuaded to let the rent—the whole twelvemonth's rent—stand over to the following year, he might rub on, and eventually, by growing only root crops, pull through. But if the retired attorney would insist upon being paid the fifty pounds, the amateur agriculturist did not see how it would be possible to get through the year whilst the crops were growing; hardly then. Still, it might be barely possible to do so.

On the 30th of September, 1845, Blagden (arrived from London on the previous day) called at Stape Hill for the year's rent. He came in a one-horse gig, which, as he was in the habit of

doing, he had hired at the Roebuck, Poole. It was growing dusk when he reached the place ; he stayed about two hours, and it was quite dark, except for a faint starlight, when he left in high dudgeon.

There had been a stormy scene between him and Joseph Gibson, at which were present Catherine Gibson and James Somers, who had cleverly, or cunningly, managed to keep well both with the tenant and proprietor.

Blagden flatly refused to wait one day longer for his rent. The terrified tenant's beseeching remonstrances ; the daughter's tears ; even the pretty positive opinion of Somers that were the time asked for granted, Mr. Gibson might come round—had no effect upon the retired lawyer. To end the matter, he took his pocket-book, which being stuffed with Bank of England notes, he ostentatiously spread open, selected a ready-drawn, stamped receipt for fifty pounds from a number of others, placed it upon the table, drew forth his watch, and said he would wait just half an hour for the money ; if it were not then forthcoming,

he should leave, and on the morrow an execution for the amount and costs would be put in. Furious, maddened with rage and disappointment, Gibson leapt at his landlord, and inflicted a severe blow upon his face, at the same time howling forth threats of direst vengeance.

The misguided man was forcibly separated from Blagden by his daughter and James Somers. The landlord (Catherine afterwards told me) remained quite cool ; and but for the quiver of his ashen lips, the calm, deadly ferocity which gleamed in his grey eyes, any one might have believed that the assault was a trifling matter, of no importance whatever.

There was a slight lull after the storm, and Catherine, taking advantage of it, said :—" I will go and ask Mr. Finch to advance my father forty pounds upon the piece of carrots he has bought. They will be digged next week. We have quite ten pounds in the house, and shall then be able to pay the rent in full."

" You have just twenty minutes, Miss Gibson," said the imperturbable lawyer. " Just twenty minutes—not one more or less. The cowardly

assault committed upon me," he added, with a flash of hell-fire at his tenants, "a court of law shall pronounce upon ! Somers, see the horse is put into the trap."

Somers said that should be done, and left the room to do it. Miss Gibson left at the same time. She was gone but a quarter of an hour. Mr. Finch was out, and Mrs. Finch said he never paid money till he was in possession of the goods purchased. Mr. Blagden took no apparent notice of what Catherine Gibson said, waited till the half-hour was exactly expired, took up his watch, wrapped his long fur-collar cloak about him, and left.

Soon after it was light the next morning, two sailors on their way to join a vessel in the harbour of Poole came upon the dead body of Mr. Blagden, lying across the narrow but high road. A little distance off was the horse and gig ; the animal, one of his forelegs broken, was suffering great torture ; and both shafts of the gig were broken. Immediate alarm was given, and before long a number of people came up, by whom it was at first

supposed that Mr. Blagden had met his death by accident. The horse, a high-spirited animal, had perhaps bolted, and the gig coming in contact with one of the trees, which dotted each side of the road, had been turned over with great violence, and Mr. Blagden, hurled upon the hard road, had probably been killed instantaneously. A very cursory examination sufficed to show the fallacy of that surmise. There was a deep wound in the bark of the dead man's neck—apparently delivered by a sharp axe, which had cut through the stand-up fur collar of the cloak he wore. No question that he had been struck from behind. Robbery had ~~had~~ been added to murder; the deceased gentleman's pocket-book, purse, and gold watch were gone. There was another wound in the crown scalp, sufficient in itself to cause death, and which must have been inflicted when the head was bare, as there was not the slightest cut visible in the texture of the hat, which was found some yards off. The murdered man's clenched hands were filled with the gravel of the road, grasped no doubt in his agony, and suggestive that he must have been

either forced upon the ground or kneeling when the mortal blow was dealt. But how had the gig been stopped—the horse flung down, and reduced to so pitiable state? A question that not very readily answered. Two or three days subsequently a clothes-line, almost new, one end of which had been recently cut, was found by a woman, buried under the hedge of a cottage, situate between the spot where the murder was committed and Stape Hill Farm. One of the woman's hens, in scratching under the hedge, had brought it to the surface. The circumstance was spoken of, but no importance was attached to it. The murdered man had not been strangled. The buried cord could not therefore have been the instrument, or one of the instruments, of death! Still, it was odd that the full half of a long, new clothes-line should have been carefully buried near the scene of the awful crime!

No sooner was the murder, and the circumstances connected with it, known at Poole, than every finger pointed to Joseph Gibson, the tenant of the Stape Hill Farm, as the murderer. His savage threat at the Roebuck was remembered; and it

was known to several persons that his sole chance, admitted to be so by himself, was that Blagden should let the year's rent then due stand over till the following Michaelmas! One person, of the name of Frost, who had done some smith's-work for Gibson, having told him he was trusting to a broken-reed in relying upon lawyer Blagden's generosity, received for reply, that "Blagden would be very unwise to provoke him too far!" This expression was held to indicate a settled determination in Gibson's mind to kill his landlord, should the required favour be refused. A skilled detective would have drawn an inference just the reverse of that. No man, unless he be delirious with drink or rage, hints of his intention, under certain contingencies, to commit murder!

Joseph Gibson, unprovided with professional aid, was taken before the coroner's inquest, and the cumulative evidence brought against him was certainly staggering. The scene at Stape Hill, already given,—the assault by Gibson upon the attorney, and his ferocious menaces,—Blagden's threat to distrain early in the next day,—the vain attempt

by Catherine Gibson to borrow money of Mr. Finch to make up the rent—were capped by the discovery, in Gibson's bureau in his bed-room, Stape Hill, by the Poole police, of the genuine stamped receipt for the money, which Blagden had placed tauntingly upon the table, and taken away with him. Unceremonious verdict of wilful murder against Joseph Gibson, who was forthwith committed on the coroner's warrant to Dorchester jail!

This narrative I heard from the daughter, with exception of the conversation at the Roebuck, of which she herself had heard but a vague, indistinct report from her father.

It has been stated that Mr. Joseph Gibson was and had been long separated from his wife, a person of remarkable personal attractions. Neither her maiden name nor that which she has since the separation passed under need be printed in these pages. It is sufficient to say that she was an orphan girl and a milliner's assistant when Gibson foolishly fell in love with and married her. As often happens in such cases, the disappointment was mutual. Gibson at the time had quite

a splendid shop, was in the first flush of a year's promising business, kept two servants; which items summed up meant, of course, nothing to do, a well-furnished table, silk and satin dresses, cabs to theatres, &c. In short, the life of a ladyship, *minus* only the title. And the bridegroom, no doubt, expected to be imparadised in the smiles and endearments of the entrancing milliner's assistant to the full end and term of his natural life. Well, the business did not answer so well as might have been reasonably expected—one servant was first lopped off, omnibus must serve for a cab, with the rest of such disagreeable declines in life. The husband (time and familiarity are such disenchanters) discovered that his wife was not quite the angel he had supposed, and—and the young lady was frail. A separation took place, and the guilty wife had since continued to live in splendid sin. Twenty years ago only a rich man could obtain a divorce—the matrimonial chain yielded only to a golden file—and Mr. and Mrs. Gibson were still, of course, in legal parlance, man and wife. The woman, however, was not all bad;

few are—neither man nor woman, none that I have known ; and having read the report, copied into the London papers from the *Poole Herald*, of the proceedings at the inquest on Blagden's death, she forwarded to her daughter Catherine, a draft, in a feigned name, for one hundred pounds ; and at the same time, so influenced—not directly, of course—influential persons, that I was commanded to proceed to Poole and Stape Hill, and minutely investigate the case. A letter from “the friend” who had forwarded the one hundred pound draft, addressed to Miss Gibson, preceded me ; and I was welcomed with tears of trembling hope. I think Catherine Gibson guessed that “the friend” was her fallen mother ; but she hinted nothing of the kind, and indeed it was not till all was over that I myself had any notion—a matter after all of supreme indifference—as to who pulled the strings by which I was set in motion.

It was a very, very ugly affair. Before going into the business with Miss Gibson, I, in accordance with my invariable tactics, made myself thoroughly acquainted with the case againstus—in this instance

the case for the Crown. A sight of your adversary's cards is a good step towards winning the game. The sight, however, of the formidable cards held by the Crown in "Regina v. Gibson" did not at all reassure me.

The Poole police had not only deposed that the prisoner, when surprised in his bed on the morning of the murder, so late as eleven o'clock—he that usually rose by six at latest—exclaimed when he saw the officers, who had not spoken a syllable respecting the murder of Blagden, not even mentioned that gentleman's name, opening his bureau, he cried out, "Ah ! it's all over with me. I shall be hanged, I suppose, for that devil Blagden. Take me away at once." After that betraying avowal, he assumed the mask of sudden silence—not speaking another word except when, as they were going along the road with him, in a chaise cart, towards Poole, one of them, when passing or nearing the spot where the crime had been committed, said, "I can't but think Blagden fought hard for his life, whoever murdered him." "Whoever murdered Blagden!" exclaimed Gibson,

with a fearful start, "what are you talking of? Robbed him perhaps?" "Murdered and robbed him," said the officer; "but, mind, no one asks you to let out about it." At hearing which, the prisoner gave a loud cry, and fainted or pretended to faint away.

Since then he had not said a word upon the subject; the attorney who appeared for him when he was examined before the magistrates having "reserved his client's defence." Since then there had been found at Stape Hill, in an outhouse, a sharp billhook, the blade and handle of which were stained with blood. It was such an instrument as might, the surgeon who had examined the body deposed, have inflicted the wound which deprived the deceased Blagden of life; and thrust away amongst old rags and other lumber, in a place which Miss Gibson admitted her father could only have access to, was an old apron, just such a one as the prisoner sometimes wore, covered with blood-stains. These evidences—dumb, yet endowed with miraculous voice—had been carefully sealed up, and remained in pos-

session of the local police. Catherine Gibson endeavoured to account for the blood upon the finely-sharpened bill-hook, by saying that her father had a few days before the death of Mr. Blagden chopped off the head of a gander, which bled very much. Gibson did not, however, she admitted, wear the bloody apron upon that occasion. None of the money belonging to Mr. Blagden, neither notes nor coin—he had a small canvass bag full, or nearly so, of sovereigns—had been found, nor had the gold watch. It had all, no doubt, been cunningly concealed; but he (the officer with whom I was conversing) had little doubt that with patience and perseverance they should discover the hiding-hole.

“Does it not strike you as somewhat remarkable,” said I, “that Gibson did not also cunningly conceal the stamped receipt, the most damning piece of evidence against him? It *might* be legally impossible to prove that the notes and gold, even the watch, belonged to Mr. Blagden; *might* be I say—though that, as regards the watch, is a violent supposition. But the receipt, about which there

can be no mistake—the man must have lost his head not to have concealed or destroyed that.”

“He, no doubt, intended to produce it in bar of the claim for rent which would be made by the deceased’s representatives !”

“Although Somers could prove that he had not paid the rent, and Mrs. Finch that she had refused to Catherine Gibson the means of doing so ! Queer to my mind that. Still the easily discoverable possession of the receipt is, however looked at, unaccountable. It can only be explained by the axiom that whom God determines to destroy he first deprives of reason. Did I understand you to say that the prisoner had been fully committed for trial by the magistrates as well as by the coroner ?”

“Yes ; fully committed in reality, not formally. The magistrates, having no doubt whatever of the prisoner’s guilt, declared their intention of fully committing him for wilful murder ; but he will be again brought before them the day after to-morrow, for the completion of the depositions. At present he remains in Poole Jail.”

"The day after to-morrow! Oh, by-the-bye, is the clothes-line, or half of a clothes-line, scratched out by a hen from under a hedge, handy?"

"Yes, it is here. I will show it you. But I really do not see what possible connection that can have with the murder."

"I do not say it has; still I should like to see it."

It was shown me.

"Humph! A new line — one of the best make. A new line spoiled to no purpose. This piece is not above six yards long; sharply severed, too; and there is a slip-noose at one end!"

"True enough; but what use could have been made of it in effecting the murder?"

"Well, a very efficient use; but we will speak of that hereafter. Keep it safe if you please. The hedge where it was scratched up was not road-gravel, I suppose; and there are many particles of road-gravel sticking to this line, or I am mistaken. Have you leisure to go with me to the scene of the murder?"

"Yes," replied the officer, "I will go with much pleasure."

The notion which had struck me about the clothes-line was derived from a former police experience near Hereford. How the horse had been thrown down with such violence as to break one of its legs—a singularly sure-footed animal too—had puzzled the natives. Now, it had come out in the Hereford business—which ended in nothing, the person robbed having refused to prosecute—that the robbers had, in that case, thrown the gentleman's horse (he also drove a gig) down by a very simple expedient. A line was dropped in the dark across the road, attached by a running noose at one end to the stump of a tree, at about two feet from the ground, which, suddenly tighteued as the horse came swiftly up, would bring down the surest-footed beast in the world, with terrible violence. The same trick might have been played upon this occasion. I was pretty sure it had been; and the other portion of the clothes-line might suffice to hang whoever could be proved to have had it in his possession on the night of the murder.

The place where the horse must have fallen was just the spot where such a device might be resorted to with success. The road was narrow, level ; the horse would be going at its swiftest pace ; and there was an oak-sapling on one side, round which the running noose could be slipped, and fixed at any height. One man, having the other end in his hand, and *seizing the exact moment* for raising it, could throw any swift horse down. Yes ; but to do so was scarcely to be expected of a Cockney oil and colourman—one too prematurely feeble, aged. No, no ; if that trick had been played, it was by some one whose eyes could see in the dark as well as by daylight ; one possessed of nerve, quickness, decision, which would bring down a partridge before it had fluttered its wings thrice.

“Clever poachers about herè?” I carelessly remarked, speaking to my brother-officer.

“I should think so. Rum fellows to meet with of a dark night too !”

“Mr. Gibson, the prisoner, can hardly be one of that sort, I should think ?”

“God bless you ! no. I should hardly think he

knows a snipe from a partridge, except when they are cooked; nor how to so much as load a gun."

"Have you any first-rate moonlight fellows about here?"

"Yes; but the cleverest, by a long chalk, is gone out of that line—Jem Somers, as lives at Stape Hill. He used to be an out-and-outer. He's not exactly such a bad sort," continued the officer, "as everybody, or almost everybody (Mr. Blagden liked him very much), says he is. He's very sorry, seems almost heart-broken about this horrible affair—Mr. Gibson and his daughter having been, he says, so kind to him. He thinks, if he can't get a tolerable situation, which he can hardly expect now Mr. Blagden is dead, of going to America."

"America! Well, he'll have plenty of sport there. I suppose such a tender-hearted gentleman would be most grieved for the fate of his oldest friend, Mr. Blagden."

"No, really, no. He is most distressed about Gibson and his daughter. Tears come into his eyes

every time he speaks about them. Why," continued the greenly-guileless officer, "Why, to get out of him, before the coroner and magistrates, about what passed at Stape Hill between Gibson and Blagden, when there was such a row because Gibson could not pay his rent, was like pulling the very teeth out of his head."

"But it came out, as the teeth would, at last. He's a 'cute chap, too, I am pretty sure, as well as soft-hearted?"

"'Cute, I should think so! Catch a weasel asleep, and you may chance to drop upon Jim Somers when he's got one eye shut."

"He lives, you say, in the same house with the Gibsons?"

"Yes; but not exactly. They have a place to themselves that joins on like to the farmhouse, but yet separated from it."

"I understand. They have their own castle. Every Englishman—the humblest—likes that, if the castle is a wooden one, the roof thatched with furze. Their own poultry, pig, and washing-yard also, I suppose?"

"Yes ; quite distinct from the farm-house. Jim's wife showed me over it the other day."

I was pleased at that ; for it had occurred to me that I should like to see *Jim Somers' last new clothes-line, or what remained of it.*

I had a long conference with Catherine Gibson ; but it was far from a heartening one. When she had done, I said :

"There is one circumstance I should be glad to hear from your own lips, if you choose to honour me with your confidence. I mean, of course, if you can throw any light upon the seeming mystery. It is this : how came the receipt for the rent due (fifty pounds) in your father's possession ?"

The young woman's face flushed—the flush, I was sure, of shame. She cast down her eyes, and remained silent.

"If I am to be of any service, I must know *all*," said I, gently, but firmly.

"I understand that," said Catherine Gibson, not uplifting her eyes. "I will tell you. Mr. Blagden, in his hurry and passion, did not observe that it

had dropped on the floor ; and left, supposing, no doubt, that he had replaced it in his pocket-book. After he was some time gone, my father saw the piece of paper, picked it up, and—and——”

“Appropriated it, you mean to say ; or had some indistinct notion—a very foolish notion—that it might be a bar to the execution to be put in on the morrow. And when the police called on the morrow, the still wilder notion arose in his mind, that an intention, if he had really intended such a crime, of *stealing* the receipt, was equivalent, under the circumstances, of having really done so. Absurd ! but I can readily understand such a feeling. Your father, perhaps, drank more than usual that night, after Mr. Blagden’s departure ?”

“Oh ! more, much more. My father is a very abstemious man.”

“So I have been told. The receipt stumbling-block, as far as I am concerned, is removed. The man Somers and his wife are, I am told, very kind and serviceable to you in this sad crisis ?”

“Very kind and attentive ; more so than ever they were.”

"I should much like to see Somers. Perhaps I could glean something from him or his wife which, though deemed unimportant by you and them, might in my eyes be of significance. Is he within?"

"His wife is not, but he is—in the next building which adjoins this. Shall I say who you are?"

"Not that I am a detective-officer, if you please. It would not, perhaps, so much matter that Somers should know my vocation; but if I am to serve your father, I must work, like a mole, in the dark. Say simply, and which is the truth, that I am a friend from London, anxious to assist your father in his, I trust, passing trouble."

"I will do so. He will be here in three minutes."

"Not of the least use, James Somers, to fence with me with that smoothly-loose tongue of yours; to look modestly, sorrowfully upon the floor with those catlike eyes. *I know you, and that you are the murderer of Mr. Blagden!*

"A moment after Miss Gibson passed out at the

front, I left by the back door, making a trivial excuse to the servant, and saying I would return in a moment. You came out of your house with Miss Gibson, and I took the liberty of walking in. Had I been seen by either of you, it would have been easy to say that I went to tell you I would prefer seeing you and Mrs. Somers (she not being then in the way) on the morrow. Neither of you did see me. But *I* saw in a large table drawer, which I took the liberty of inspecting, the longest half of a clothes-line, sharply cut, of the newness, colour, and, I think, rather peculiar twist of that found under the hedge. It's not likely you'll miss it before it has answered the present purpose I shall put it to; and if you do, the last thought that will enter that cunning—but, as I can see plainly enough through the flat-crowned, animally-shaped skull—uneasy, palpitating brain of yours, that it is now in the coat-pocket of a London detective officer. Though of itself hardly strong enough to make a halter for that bull-neck of yours, it will perhaps enable me to find something that will. Oh! you have nothing more to say,

except to repeat how "mortal sorry" you be for the young missus, and for Mr. Gibson too! I have no doubt, Somers, you are a feeling man, and especially just now you must feel very strongly. I am sure you do. I have nothing more to ask. Miss Gibson is positive that her father is innocent, and we must trust to Providence to make the truth manifest. To-morrow I may, or may not, call to see your wife. Good-day, Miss Gibson. I have promised to dine with an acquaintance in Poole, and must be gone."

The end of clothes-line which I had brought away from Somers' place precisely matched with that in possession of the Poole police: colour, size, twist were identical, and both pieces made up in length that of an ordinary clothes-line. If the county magistrate—to whom the officer I had previously spoken with, whose name I forget, volunteered to introduce me—had any brains in his head, he would, in a case involving such issues, grant a warrant to search Somers' premises. The magistrate fortunately had brains in his head. I

mentioned the Hereford affair, showed him the sundered clothes-cord, and declared my willingness to make oath that I had sufficient grounds for suspecting James Somers of having murdered and robbed Mr. Arthur Blagden, to justify the issuing of a search-warrant. I had brought written testimony as to my detective acumen, signed "Richard Mayne;" and it is probable that that as much, if not more than the evidence of the clothes-line, decided him to grant the warrant, which was placed at once in the hands of the police officer, whose name I have forgotten, and off we both set without delay for Stape Hill.

Somers and his wife were greatly scared by our visit, the man especially so, upon finding that Miss Gibson's friend was a London detective. Our search was ineffectual, so far as that no property of the murdered man could be found; neither notes, gold, or watch; but a very sharply-ground hand-axe, put away in a corner-cupboard, attracted my attention. "This is your husband's axe?" "O yes; our axe!" I examined it minutely. First with the naked eye, then with a strong magnifier,

which I was seldom or never without. The axe had been washed, not so very long ago; and, though nothing was visible to the naked eye, my magnifier discovered upon the blade, not only spots of red rust, which might or might not be stains of blood, but a number of what looked to be minute fibres of fur sticking to the stains. On removing the wooden handle, we saw distinct marks of blood, which I concluded had been washed, as it were, into the socket. The man saw those marks, and turning cadaverously white, exclaimed that he had killed a snared rabbit with it not long before.

“A rabbit?”

“Yes, a snared rabbit.”

“You have killed nothing else with it?”

“Oh no!”

“You had better take this axe with you, at all events,” said I to the local officer. “It may be of no consequence; still you had better take possession of the instrument.”

Once when I attended a lecture by a celebrated man, he had stated that every animal had in its blood globules differing in size from those of any

other kind. This knowledge had been arrived at by very slow steps. There was no doubt, however, of its scientific accuracy, or that with the aid of a powerful microscope a professional man of skill and experience could decide, without chance of committing a mistake, from the slightest stain whether the blood, if blood, had flowed in the veins of a human being or other animal. It was the same with minute fibres of fur, hair, &c. This he had said was a most valuable discovery, and he instanced the fact that in France an innocent man might have been convicted of murder owing to a knife having been found in his possession stained with what had every appearance of blood, which stains examined by a skilled gentleman through the microscope was proved to be lime juice.

The lecture had made a great impression on me at the time, and it occurred to me that here was a case in which such a discovery, such a power, would prove invaluable? The fur cloak collar of the murdered man, it will be remembered, had been cut through; the skull had also been split by the assassin. Were those minute fibres of fur

sticking on the blade of the axe, fibres of rabbit fur, or of that, whatever it might be, of which the cloak collar was made? and were there any, the slightest shreds of human hair mingled with those particles of fur? Then as to the blood upon Gibson's billhook, and upon the old rag of an apron; was that human blood?

In the scientific replies to these questions lay the issue of life and death as regarded the prisoner Gibson; and as, although not knowing *who* "the friend" was that sent Miss Gibson the one hundred pound draft, I knew how to communicate with him or her, I determined to do so without delay, and I started in a gig for Dorchester ten minutes after I had so decided, there not being a moment to spare—reached London by train, and with the potent agency of "A Friend's" purse, engaged the services of the most eminent professor of that especial branch of anatomical science in the metropolis, with whom I returned to Poole.

The court was crowded on the day when it had been expected that Joseph Gibson would be finally committed for trial—a rumour having got afloat,

that owing to the Detective who had been sent down from London, strange discoveries had been made. Poor Gibson looked more like a ghost than a man. He believed himself to be the doomed victim of a relentless fate—that nothing, no accident could—that God would not reveal the truth.

The billhook, the apron, the axe were placed upon the table, and Professor Ansted (by whom they had been carefully examined) gave his evidence: it was clear, decisive. The blood upon the billhook was *not* human blood; of that he said there could be no possible doubt. The stains upon the apron were red paint, containing peroxide of iron. (Gibson, when oil and colourman, no doubt, had to grind his own paints, and when so occupied used the apron.) The stains upon the axe, found in the house of Somers, were human blood (there were human hairs sticking on them); and the particles of fur were not rabbit but squirrel fur—the fur of which the murdered man's cloak collar was made!

Seldom has evidence—almost supernatural it seemed to the astounded audience—produced a

deeper impression than did Professor Ansted's. The finger of God appeared to be visible in it! "William," who had proved himself a true lover throughout, burst into tears, as he pressed forward and shook the prisoner, and his daughter, standing close to her father, warmly by the hands.

The magistrates, who appeared to be somewhat mystified, bewildered, retired to consult with each other. Returned into court, the chairman announced, that relying upon the evidence of so distinguished a gentleman as Professor Ansted, a warrant for the apprehension of James Somers would be immediately issued; but that for the present it was not thought prudent to discharge the prisoner Joseph Gibson. The case would be adjourned for three days.

The magistrates were saved any further trouble in the matter by the murderer himself. An acquaintance in court, specially employed for that purpose, had ridden off to Stape Hill directly the decision of the magistrates was declared; who, of course, apprised Somers that a warrant was out against him for wilful murder, and that the officers

would be there almost immediately to arrest him. The despairing felon heard the news with a savage growl, and a moment or so afterwards desired to be left alone.

The door of the room, in which his wife (weeping, sobbing, wringing her hands the while) said we should find him, was fastened on the inside. We burst it open ; and a shocking spectacle presented itself. Somers was lying dead on the floor, in a pool of blood, self-murdered ; he had cut his throat with a razor. On a small table we found a scrap of writing in his hand :—"It was I, not Gibson, that killed Blagden. I had owed him a bitter grudge a long time, though he didn't think it. D—n him, he ruined me body and soul when he sold me up eight years ago. What I wish particularly to say is, that my wife is as innocent as a babe in the business. She don't even know where the money and watch is, or that I have such things. They are hidden away in a box under the flagstones of one of my pig-styes—the right hand one going out. That is all I have to say. I thought of going to America ; and now I'm going to ——, if there is

such a place, which I don't believe. The Peeler was right about the clothes-line; that was just how it was done.—J. S.”

The money, watch, &c., we found as indicated. All doubt respecting the terrible business being at an end, Joseph Gibson was forthwith discharged from prison. His case excited much sympathy. The executors of Arthur Blagden allowed him to throw up his farm, forgiving him the arrears of rent; and he, with the help, I believe anonymously conveyed through the daughter, of “A Friend,” took a smaller and culturable one not very far off from Stape Hill; and has since, I have been told, prospered tolerably. His daughter, I saw by the local paper which some of them sent me now and then, married “William.”

BEN BOLT.

BEN BOLT was the *sobriquet* or nick-name—stolen, I am told, from an old song—of one of the most scampish of scamps I have ever met with. He dwelt, or rather burrowed, in Bermondsey; in one of its slummiest streets too—Pasley-street. He was also known as Cast-iron Jack; I suppose, because he kept a rag and old iron shop. Many persons will remember him. He was killed at the great fire where Mr. Braithwaite lost his valuable life. His real name was Edward Summers. This I did not know till some time after this story commences. The name, painted very cheaply I should say, over his door was Jarvis—Thomas Jarvis. He was not however *all* bad, as the sequel will show. He was a good-looking fellow enough,—sporting “love-locks,” as such spiral hair-twistings used to be called; believed himself to be irresistible with girls

of his grade, and it may be for that reason acquired the appellation of Ben Bolt.

In the crypt of that man's memory there gleamed, or I was much mistaken, a grim, ghastly skeleton. That merriment, philandering of his was but ghostly merriment, philandering — the parody of a long-since passed, dead-and-buried reality. This notion came thus wise into my head.

Rag, bottle, and old iron shops are marked spots, so to speak, in the ordinary policeman's beat. Frequently, too, they are honoured with the superior solicitude (excuse me) of a first-class detective. Twice, as I know by my diary, ordinary business took me to 27, Pasley-street, Bermondsey.

The first time I had occasion to call upon Thomas Jarvis, was to inquire if he had purchased certain articles of clothing, which had been worn by the infant-daughter of one Sidney Giles, a grocer, established in business at Swansea, who, with his family, had come to London, to see the Great Exhibition (1851).

He at once admitted that he had purchased the

articles I described, and readily gave me such information as enabled me to recover the child, and send the woman who stole her to the treadmill for two years. That, however, is from the purpose of this narrative. It had simply, with respect to Ben Bolt's history, this effect—that thenceforth he knew me to be Clarke the detective. I do not remember that any grave suspicion of Thomas Jarvis was suggested to me at that first meeting with him. Yet it may, *must* I think, have been so, or why should I, when that poor Jane Winter was found murdered, stripped to her skin, upon Blackheath, have gone to his place, and demanded, with fierce peremptoriness of tone,—not if he had purchased the scarlet cloak and other apparel belonging to the Unfortunate (she was a *gay* girl, as many readers will remember),—but “if he knew, and what he knew of the murder on Blackheath.” The exact words I used, it was afterwards sworn—there were several persons in the shop—the exact words I used, it was, I say, afterwards sworn, but I doubted the literal accuracy of the statement, were:—“Now, Jarvis, tell me all about the

murder on Blackheath — of Jane Winter, you know !”

Let me admit, as some foundation for such sweeping *clairvoyance*, that I had seen Ben Bolt talking—toying with Jane Winter in Blackfriar’s-road, not perhaps more than a fortnight before her naked corpse was found upon the heath. A chain of ideas often originates and remains indissolubly connected with an obscure, buried link of that chain.

What unseen spectre suddenly confronted the man, that he should so startle, so pale?—he, as I knew before another hour had passed, being entirely, and of course consciously, guiltless of any complicity in, any knowledge of the Unfortunate’s death ; knew too that his perfect innocence could be established by indisputable proof. Yes, innocence—as regarded the death of Jane Winter. But what affrighting image suddenly rises up before you when you are suddenly questioned about the murder of a girl upon Blackheath? Were there windows in men’s bosoms, I should see one serpent, if not more than one, coiled around

that shrinking heart of thine. Yes ; surely one, if not more.

Whilst I was in the shop speaking with Ben Bolt, a white, wan woman's face—rendered visible, as I may say, by the light of large, black, wild eyes—showed itself outside, pressing almost close to the window. Ben Bolt saw the face as soon as I did, and went quietly out. I heard the clink of coppers, bestowed with a hearty curse.

I noticed the direction in which the white, wan woman directed her feeble steps ; and after a few minutes further converse with Jarvis, I followed.

She had not gone far—to the next gin-palace only. I closely scrutinised her features—she unregardful—in the glare of the gas.

A handsome face—I mean the wreck of a handsome face ; smirched, seared with what has been aptly termed distilled damnation. As to years, she could not have been much over forty. There was a silent sorrow, too, in those wild, dark

eyes ; the shadow of a terrible grief that would never pass away.

Presently she noticed that I was attentively regarding her.

"Ah, Mr. Clarke!" she exclaimed. "Do you think you will know me again?"

"You know my name, it seems. What may be yours?"

"Lord bless you, Mr. Detective! I have a dozen—Smith, Green, Brown, Jones, Robinson. Pay your money for a quartern, and take your choice."

"Is Jarvis one of your many names?"

"Jarvis! To the devil with Jarvis!" and her eyes shot-lightning. "Ah yes, I saw you in that hell-fire villain's shop. I remember now. You, I suppose, were inquiring about poor Jane Winter's death. He is innocent of *that* murder, Mr. Detective!—though he knew her very well. There is no use in beating that bush."

"Nor any other, I suppose? Never mind, I shall stand a quartern."

"I don't know that I couldn't point you out a

bush that, in a detective sense, would pay for beating !”

“Will you point out that particular bush?”

“Perhaps I will; perhaps I wont. It depends. I *have* sometimes thought of sending to you.”

“Sending to me! About what? Come, out with it. Here,” I added, *sotto voce*, for there was a meaning in the woman’s glance I wished to be interpreted in words—“here, let us have a quiet confab in this inner room.”

“Yes, I will. It may be a Providence. I don’t know. I have dreamt lately—Well, I *will* talk to you.”

A sad, most sad, suggestive story I heard during the next half-hour from those pale, quivering lips; emphasized by the now fierce, now tender flashes of Marian Tredgold’s eyes. (That was her real name.) Yes; a sad, solemn story. I render it briefly.

Marian Tredgold—her maiden name was Raymond—was born in Sidmouth, Devonshire, of very poor parents. If I understood her rightly, the

father was fisherman, boat-builder, and night-poacher by turns. That, however, signifies little. The great life-swaying fact was, that before Marian Raymond had seen her eighteenth birthday, Martin Tredgold (the son of a wealthy watchmaker and jeweller in Sidmouth) persuaded her to contract a secret marriage with him. The marriage was repudiated by the husband's relatives; and the end was that a legal separation was agreed to. The wife had fifty pounds per annum secured to her during the husband's life. That life closed—opened upon another infinitely brighter one, let us hope—before his child and daughter unclosed her eyes in this. The annuity lapsed, of course; and the stern-parents of the dead husband were deaf to all appeals for pity. The mother and widow vainly appealed to them. Not even crumbs from their well-furnished table could she be permitted to partake of. And her own father and mother, long ailing people, died within a few weeks of each other. There is an old country saying, that “An empty sack can never stand upright.” Quite true. And to the consciousness of that truth—felt

instinctively to be true by all of us—it is no doubt owing that the mob, whether that of St. James or St. Giles, always sympathize with the weak, the helpless; it signifying little that the weakness, the helplessness, have been by their own acts brought upon themselves.

Marian Tredgold and the paramour she had picked up left Sidmouth and dwelt for some years—till Ellen Tredgold had passed her ninth birthday—in the neighbourhood of Exeter. The man died insolvent, as such men usually do. Then Mrs. Tredgold and her child came to London—the vast maelstrom which attracts, absorbs, hides from view the wrecks that would else, floating awhile upon the solitary sea of rustic, provincial life, be the mark, whilst they so floated, for Scorn to point his slow moving finger at.

Seven more years must, in playhouse phrase, be supposed to have passed; but seven demoralising years, no doubt, as regarded Mrs. Tredgold. But the mother's is—except in utterly depraved natures—a self-sanctifying, redeeming love. Fallen as she herself was, Mrs. Tredgold

managed in some way—and we may be sure there must have been some struggle and selfdenial to achieve such a result—to keep her child not only uncontaminated, but in happy ignorance of her mother's guilt and shame. Ellen Tredgold was placed at a boarding-school in Maidstone. Some plausible story was invented—exactly what, I did not hear or care to hear—to account for the isolation of the girl, whom her mother visited once in every month. White days these must have been in that dark life!

Time and the hour running through the roughest day had, as I before stated, brought the mother to her daughter's sixteenth birthday—the lost woman had no count of years save that. That birthday had been passed—some months passed I believe—when lightning flashed from that one blue spot in the black firmament of life. The miserable mother showed me the letter written by the Misses Parkinson, and addressed, as all such communications were, to Mrs. Stirling, Saint Martin-le-Grand, to be left till called for. It was to the effect that Miss Ellen Tredgold had absconded, that

the most anxious inquiries had been made with no enlightening result, &c. The mother, in a state of pitiable distraction, at once hurried to Maidstone; but could ascertain nothing except that Ellen Tredgold had been several times seen in the gloaming with a Mr. Stansfield, a very dashing young gentleman, staying at the principal inn in Maidstone, and yet oftener in seemingly confidential converse with his servant, a much finer person in some respects than his master.

“And after several years of anxious inquiry, you, Mrs. Tredgold, discovered, by the merest accident, that the servant, and in some respects much finer person than his master, was Thomas Jarvis, the rag-shop man.”

“I did not say it was entirely accident, because——”

“Well, never mind about that. Jarvis said he married your daughter, and she was drowned, with other passengers, in the Erin steam-packet, when crossing over from Holyhead to Howth, near Dublin, where he (Jarvis) was staying with his master at the time. My impression is that the Erin

was lost on her passage from London to Belfast.. But that is of no consequence—at least of no present consequence. He constantly refuses, you say, to give the name of his master ; gives you curses, and at times a few coppers for all reply. You have yourself seen the marriage register at St. George's Church, Bloomsbury?"

"Yes. It sets forth that Ellen Tredgold and Thomas Jarvis were married on the day named, by banns duly published."

"By banns, which would have necessitated three weeks' delay. Very unlikely that, under the circumstances. Still ——. You say there was no Ellen Tredgold, no Ellen Jarvis, in the list of passengers who perished with the Erin."

"No ; but Ben Bolt says my daughter went by his request or order under the name of Mrs. Thompson, and a Mrs. Thompson *was* a passenger in the Erin."

"Thompson! A common name enough. And now tell me again, and with full detail, why you suspect that your child has been foully dealt with? This is a business that must and shall be strictly sifted."


There is no need to pester the reader with the woman's prolix narrative. Its purport will be developed by my action in the matter.

"I must speak with you, Thomas Jarvis, as you call yourself," said I, a few days after my conference with that wretched Mrs. Tredgold. "Let us go into your back parlour. No airs of indignation, *Edward Summers*! I know all about you! Know a good deal about Archer Preswick, Esquire; and must know more of you. Now then, and before the brazen colour returns to your cheek—which it will not do very soon—hear what I have to say, as preface to the revelations you will be anxious to make. To begin with—Mrs. Thompson, who was drowned in the *Erin*, was not Ellen Tredgold. The real Mrs. Thompson's husband resides in Bryanstone-square. I have seen and spoken with him. Lie No. 1 is consequently pitched to the father of lies, and is no doubt treasured up in that fathomless wallet of his, as one proof that you are his property. Very good. Shockingly bad rather. And worse remains behind.

You did not marry Ellen Tredgold, at St. George's Church, Bloomsbury; Archer Preswick, Esquire, married her in your name! And now, my fine fellow—Ben Bolt, Cast-iron Jack, Thomas Jarvis, Edward Summers—tell me, if you think it prudent to do so, where Mrs. Archer Preswick is to be found?"

"She—she—is *dead*," stammered the shrinking trembling wretch.

"Who murdered her?—you or Archer Preswick? I suppose you, for the three hundred pounds with which you purchased this business?"

I never saw a poor devil  more completely knocked over."

"I—I,"—he stammered—"I will tell you all; though you seem to know everything already. I—I am not going to be hanged for what others have done."

"Certainly not, if you can help it; which may be doubtful. Now then."

"Master gave me a sleeping-draught, as he said it was—the cruel villain—which I took and gave to his wife."

"At the cottage *ornée*, a few miles from Ipswich?"

"Yes, yes. Good ! how do you know all this?"

"Detectives know everything. Go on."

"I gave the draught; believing, upon my soul, that it was harmless as milk. An hour afterwards, —less maybe,—my master comes into the pantry, where I was, and says to me, 'She's dead, Ned. You have managed the business famously.' You might have knocked me down with a feather. 'What,' says I, 'young missus dead!' 'Of course,' says he; 'dead as the earth by which she will soon be hidden out of sight.' Then he goes on in his fierce way, for I could not speak. 'There, let's have none of your snivelling nonsense. Be off to London by this night's mail; and keep quiet, or you may have an awkward crick in the neck some day. Meet me a week hence, at the George and Blue Boar, Holborn. We will then talk further.' Upon my soul, Mr. Detective, this is all I know about the young woman's death—though I have never slept quite soundly since. Mr. Archer

Preswick did meet and give me the money I bought this business with. Curse his money!" shouted the man, with explosive rage. "It is hell-money, and burns up my life! I have been dying ever since."

"There, don't go into fits. The affair may not be quite so desperate as you suppose. May not be, I say. I can understand why Mr. Preswick was desirous of fastening such an accusation upon you—of getting you out of the way—with such an impression upon your mind. Yes, that is easily understood. But now comes the test. Where is Mr. Archer Preswick to be found? and what is his real name?"

"His real name, since it must be told, is Raymond—Archibald Raymond. He is pretty well off now, and has great expectations."

"Where can I find him?"

"I can find him in London. I know his haunts."

"That will do. We will be off at once."

"Mr. Archibald Raymond must leave that game at billiards, and come with me. I am Clarke, the

detective, and have instructions to inquire strictly into the circumstances attendant upon the death of your *wife*—ELLEN TREDGOLD.

“Confined as a lunatic in the Essex Asylum? You stand in a fearful position, Mr. Raymond! Still, amends, to some extent, may be made. Of course, you must come with me.”

“A deed of separation, Mr. Raymond,” said the attorney to whom I, with full explanation, introduced Mrs. Tredgold and daughter.—“A deed of separation, Mr. Raymond, securing to your outraged wife five hundred pounds per annum, with reversion to her mother should she survive her child. That is settled then. And now as to ‘Ben Bolt.’ He must have a release from the three hundred pounds you lent him. His promissory note, payable on demand, must be given up. That also is agreed to.”

The game was played out.

TOO CLEVER BY HALF.

THE story has, I believe, been told—but not correctly—of a gentleman, habited in a long Spanish cloak, which reached below the tops of his Hessian boots, walking into an hotel, bespeaking and paying for a bed, retiring to rest, and in the morning raising a loud clamour through the house. His trousers had vanished during the night ; in the pockets of which, he asserted, was money to over twenty pounds in amount.— Certainly no trousers could be found. The gentleman had forgotten to lock the door ; and some one must have entered the chamber during the night, and carried off the missing article, with its contents. The landlord was clearly liable, and paid for the unaccountable loss, though with reluctance. Something in the stranger's manner suggested suspicion ; and the chambermaid significantly remarked, that, with that long cloak and those

high Hessian boots, trousers (which no one had seen) were not much needed in such hot weather. It was afterwards known that the gentleman had no trousers on when he entered the hotel.

The story so told is, as I have said, incorrectly given. The exact circumstances, of which I had personal cognizance, were these:—The real name of the gentleman was Eldridge—Thomas Eldridge. He had served in the Burmese war, and was wounded at the capture of Rangoon. He was a man of considerable talent ; and, though a very raffish scamp, looked the gentleman. Nor had his education been neglected. He had lately quitted the army—whether he had or had not purchased himself out, I cannot say. At all events, he was certainly in capital case when, on the evening in question—very early on a bitter December evening—he strode into the Hummums Hotel, ordered first an excellent dinner, and bespoke a bedroom for three nights. He threw off his cloak—a very handsome one, lined with silk, and trimmed with expensive fur. Unquestionably, he had trousers on when he sat down to dinner ; he displayed also a splendid

gold watch and appendages ; and his purse, from which he took the money to pay for the dinner and bed, was seen by the waiter to be full of gold. Whilst drinking wine after dinner, he had also been seen to open a pocket-book, take from it a considerable number of bank-notes, count them, and replace the book in his trousers'-pocket. Several persons in the coffee-room saw him do so. He retired to bed late, and more than half intoxicated, having disposed of two bottles of port. The cloak, which was not of unusual length, he left in the hall. There was indeed a fierce clamour at ten the following morning, at which hour he had directed the waiter to have him called. The stranger's trousers had disappeared, and with them watch, appendages, purse, and pocket-book ! There was a terrible consternation, Mr. Eldridge setting down his loss at four hundred pounds odd. I and another detective were sent for by the landlord ; and, after a lengthened investigation, we could arrive at but one conclusion—that the stranger had really sustained the heavy loss, as alleged. He reasonably accounted for not having locked his

door, and for having left purse and pocket-book in the pockets of his trousers, by the state of semi-intoxication in which he had retired to his bed-chamber. Upon inquiry at Hoare's bank, we found that he really had, and only a day or two before, received there the bank-notes which were stolen with the pocket-book. There appeared to be no reason to suspect that any servant in the establishment was concerned in the robbery. Some one who had slept in the hotel and left in the morning—yet no one had left early—must have been the robber. That, however, which puzzled me was why the thief should have encumbered himself with a pair of trousers! instead of walking off with the easily-concealable contents. It was just unaccountable! The fact nevertheless was a stubborn one; and after consulting with his solicitor, the landlord was fain to give Eldridge a cheque covering the amount of the loss. An exasperating necessity. True; but, exasperating as it might be, there seemed to be no flaw in the claim. But the abstraction of the trousers! That was a puzzle! I could not help fancying that Thomas Eldridge

would some day or other cross my police-path ! The notes, I should state, were all paid into the Bank of England in a short time ; but so cleverly had the thing been managed, that no guilty trace could be discovered.

Two years, or about two years, had passed when my expectation or fancy was realized. And again my gentleman was claimant for a large sum of money—no less than twelve hundred pounds this time. The clever gentleman had invented a novel species of industry, or was about the most unlucky gentleman in the habit of frequenting first-rate hotels. Three or four times previously I fancied that I recognised, in newspaper descriptions of gentlemen who had mysteriously lost their property, when responsible landlords were in legal charge of it—upon one occasion at the Ship Hotel, Dover—the trousers-gentleman, varied as the name was in each instance. And I was right. This time the scene was the Trafalgar Hotel, Greenwich ; the chief actor's name, the highly-respectable one of Bouverie. Adolphus Bouverie, Esquire,—his name was so painted in white letters

on a large military-looking black leather trunk,—had been staying over a fortnight at the Trafalgar, where, from his lavish liberality, he was quite a favourite with waiters, chambermaids, boots, &c.

One day a gentleman from the establishment of Mr. Hancock, the eminent jeweller, arrived at the Trafalgar to deliver personally to Adolphus Bouverie, Esquire, jewellery to the value of over twelve hundred pounds—jewellery purchased the previous day, and paid for. Mr. Bouverie was out—would not return till late; and had left orders that if the expected casket of gems arrived during his absence, it should be placed in a particular drawer in his bed-chamber, the key of which he left with the landlord for that purpose. The casket arrived; and was placed as directed, by the landlord himself, who, having locked it up, took away the key, and gave it for safe keeping to the bar-lady. The landlord had, of course, to give a written receipt for the casket.

Adolphus Bouverie, Esquire, did not return to the Trafalgar that night. He had gone to the Queen's Theatre, to witness the performance of

Grisi in Norma, and finally decided to sleep in London.

He returned to the Trafalgar the next day, at about five in the afternoon, bringing a friend to dine with him. The landlord did not happen to be in the way, and nothing was said about the jewel casket till after dinner, when Mr. Bouverie asked a waiter to inquire if it had arrived. This brought in the landlord, who had since come into the hotel. The casket *had* come safe to hand, and there was the key of the drawer in which it had been placed. Mr. Bouverie requested a waiter to fetch it, as he wished to show the jewels to his friend. The landlord was going upstairs and would bring the casket himself.

The clamour at the Hummums when the mystery of the trousers was first announced was as nothing, as I heard it described, to the confusion of tongues which arose in the Trafalgar when the loss of the jewel-box was discovered by the astounded landlord. The only person who did not appear to share in the general dismay was Adolphus Bouverie, Esquire, himself. He remained

perfectly calm. It would be found, he said—the landlord might not remember exactly where he had put it; a suggestion which that dreadfully irritated gentleman would not listen to for a moment. The bar-lady, sternly questioned by the proprietor of the hotel, declared that she had not parted with the key entrusted to her for a single moment; vehemently insisted that her trunks—she herself—should be searched; went into violent hysterics, and was carried off to bed. The police were ultimately called in; boxes, trunks, drawers were ransacked; the hotel, in fact, turned inside out, amidst a general uproar, which did not wholly subside till past midnight, to be renewed again at cock-crow, though with gradually-abating violence. Nothing was discovered, except that the casket had vanished—that tremendous fact was ascertained beyond all possibility of doubt; and if a negative were logically proveable, it would have seemed equally clear that nobody had taken it.

Adolphus Bouverie, Esquire, was the last to give up the hope that it wouldn't turn up somewhere in some out-of-the-way unexpected place—an iteration

so frequently indulged in as to at last considerably increase the very natural savageness of the landlord, who had been privately informed by a respectable solicitor that he was unquestionably liable for every penny of the twelve hundred pounds odd, and liable in damages more for any delay or other serious inconvenience to which the loss might subject Mr. Adolphus Bouverie. It was like perpetually telling a furiously hungry man that he would be certain to get a dinner where a dinner could never by any chance be had.

At last, Adolphus Bouverie, Esquire, himself despaired of finding the missing jewel-case; ordered his bill, discharged it, sent for the landlord, and politely inquired if it would be quite convenient just then to write a cheque for the twelve hundred odd pounds sterling.

"Cursedly inconvenient," replied that gentleman, forgetting for a moment the respect due from a landlord to a guest who paid punctually; and "he only wished he had never set eyes upon Mr. Bouverie or his casket either. He would send for the London detective police, and see if

they could get to the bottom of the dreadful business. Till they had made a report he would not pay one shilling."

"You may send," said Mr. Bouverie, "if it so pleases you, to all the detectives in London. But I cannot wait here any longer; neither do I choose to delay insistance upon payment. If the loss of twelve hundred pounds would seriously inconvenience you, I might perhaps consent to bear a portion of the loss, or at least afford time for the liquidation of the debt. As it is, if the money is not paid before I leave, which will be very shortly, I shall place the matter forthwith in my solicitor's hands, with instructions to proceed with vigour and dispatch."

The telegraphic message to Scotland-yard, requesting the services of a detective officer at the Trafalgar, Greenwich, reached the office when I happened to be present and not particularly engaged. I had read a report of the jewel robbery at the Trafalgar, Greenwich, in the papers, and had felt an inclination to run down upon my own account,

without waiting for instructions, just to ascertain if it was Bouverie, *alias* Eldridge, who had lost the jewels. I, in consequence, volunteered—indeed, asked—to be sent on the Greenwich errand; the request was granted, and I was at the Trafalgar within an hour of the dispatch of the request by the landlord to Scotland-yard.

“Can I see this Mr. Adolphus Bouverie?” I asked the landlord, after listening to his lamentable story. “That is the first point.”

“I am afraid he is gone,” was the disappointing answer; “but I will inquire.”

“Step this way, Mr. Clarke. Mr. Bouverie has stayed to see the evening paper. He is in the coffee-room.”

“Mr. Eldridge”—it was that gentleman, sure enough—“I wish to speak with you in private.”

“Eldridge!” exclaimed that individual, springing up from his chair, and his face turning to the colour of new mahogany; “my name is Bouverie.”

“It may be now; but it was, two years ago, Eldridge—I mean when you were stopping at the

Hummums Hotel, and lost your trousers and property to the value of four hundred pounds there! You must remember Clarke, the detective officer, who, with another, investigated that curious business. May I speak with you?"

"Oh, certainly."

The man had recovered all his native audacity, and followed me to a private room with firm step and haughty bearing.

"Mr. Eldridge," I began, "you cannot but admit that two robberies, for large amounts, both at hotels, coupled with your change of name, suggest queer thoughts ——"

"Curse your queer thoughts! I suppose a gentleman is allowed to assume what name he pleases?"

"No question of that if the change be not made with fraudulent intent. Let me advise you to compromise this claim; the landlord is anxious to do so. He will pay six hundred pounds down for a discharge in full."

"Do your detective duty, *Mister* Clarke, if you have any detective duty to do in connexion with

this affair of the casket of jewels. I shall answer none of your impertinent questions; nor do I quite understand how I consented to see you alone." He then flung out of the room, slamming the door behind him. A few minutes afterwards I saw him walking swiftly towards the Railway Station—a porter following, with his black leather trunk. Too old a bird he to be caught with chaff.

I ran over the Hummums affair with the landlord of the Trafalgar, and advised him to resist, for a time, at all events, the action certain to be brought against him for the recovery of the twelve hundred pounds. It would be always soon enough to strike. He promised to do so. I then minutely inquired respecting every man and woman that had slept at the house and left between the time when the jewel-box was received and its loss was discovered—minutely noting down the answers I received. Only one person that had so left suggested a hint by the description given of his person. A tall, lathy gentleman, sun-freckled, with light hair, and a slight cast in his eyes, had been staying at the Trafalgar for some time, and

had left only on the morning of the day when the jewel-box must have been stolen.

"A tall, lathy, gentleman, sun-freckled, with light hair," said I, after referring to my notes of the Hummums robbery—"about forty years of age, apparently?"

"Yes, that might be about his age."

"Light grey eyes, and a slight cast in them?"

"Yes, yes! the very man."

"That man," said I, "left the Hummums early on the morning of the trousers robbery. He did not appear to know Mr. Bouverie, alias Eldridge? But of course not. That is the man, depend upon it, who, in conjunction with his fellow conspirator, Bouverie, robbed the landlord of the Hummums of four hundred, and fully intends to swindle you out of thrice that sum. They are playing a bold game; but one in which a slight slip, very easily made, will be fatal. Meantime I can but repeat my earnest advice—that the landlord of the Trafalgar shall defend the action that will certainly be brought against him."

And this really was the only rational advice

that could be offered in such a case. "Patience ! Patience ! and shuffle the cards," is a good axiom to be remembered in a long game, if there are cards to shuffle ; but here there was only one doubtful trump,—the coincidence of the tall, lank, sun-freckled, squinting man being at the Hummums and also at the Trafalgar when the two swindles were consummated. At the Hummums that peculiar gentleman went by the name of Smith ; at the Trafalgar he was Richards ; and I had no more doubt when I left Greenwich that evening, that Smith and Richards, Eldridge and Bouverie, were exulting over the success of their little game *à quatre*, played by two only, than I had of my own existence. The question was, where to drop upon them,—and even then ——

The action was brought against mine host of the Trafalgar ; and by advice of counsel, after notice of trial had been given, an application, supported by affidavits, mine amongst the number, was made to a Judge at Chambers to postpone it till the following term, upon the ground that an

important witness, who had passed by two names, as had the plaintiff in the case, could not be found. After a good deal of wrangling, the order was made ; the costs of the application to be costs in the cause. A motion was made before the full Court to quash or vary the Judge's order. It was refused ; a pretty significant intimation of their Lordships' opinion upon the merits, as disclosed by the affidavits.

All very well as far as it went, but which was by no means very far. There could be no further postponement ; and unless the tall, squinting gentleman could be found, and some trace consequently be discovered that he had passed the stolen notes,—sold or pawned the jewellery,—and did so *in collusion with Bouverie*—there would be literally no legal case whatever for the defendant. All that I could do was to obtain an accurate list and description of the jewellery from Mr. Hancock, have it printed, distribute the bills amongst pawnbrokers in town and country. I also always kept one in my pocket book. I was really anxious to unravel the “trousers” puzzle. It was very absurd

that I should allow myself to be worried by such a ridiculous incident. It was so nevertheless.

At last I ran, literally ran, against Smith alias Richards by the merest accident. It was on the day the Emperor and Empress of the French were entertained in the Guildhall by the city dignitaries. I was not on duty; and feeling some curiosity to see her Majesty, of whose beauty people who had and who had not seen her talked in such enthusiastic terms, I mingled with the crowd in Cheapside; and being much hustled and jostled on the pavement opposite King Street, was endeavouring to thread my way out, when a sway of the multitude drove me, with a great many others, against a jeweller's shop—a Mr. Trench's, I think.

The large centre glass plate was smashed in; and one tall, lanky gentleman's head was so damaged by contact with the glass, or the window-frame, or sill—all three possibly—that when something like quiet and order had been restored, it was found necessary to convey him to the nearest tavern. I was one of those who assisted in doing

so, though my left wrist had been severely cut by the broken glass, and was in great pain. The man's face interested me. Where had I seen it before? Never—after a time I was quite sure of that. Stop! Let me see. Tall, sun-freckled, sandy-haired, a slight squint. By heaven! this fellow may be Smith *alias* Richards! May be! Was! I will not impose upon the reader. In the hurry and hustling of carrying the man through the crowd, a note fell from his pocket; I picked it up, and read the address, "Adolphus Bouverie, Esquire, Star and Garter, Richmond!" There was a stamp upon the envelope; and no doubt the letter would have been presently posted. No question that the address prompted the close examination of the insensible man's features, which resulted in the conviction that he was Smith *alias* Richards. I restored the letter to Mr. Smith's pocket, and went away before he was sufficiently recovered to notice my person. I should meet with him at the Star and Garter, to some purpose I hoped. The pain too of my wounded wrist was increasing. I would get home

as quickly as possible, contenting myself with a sight of Her Majesty the Empress of the French in the print-shop windows.

It was necessary to be cautious. My reputation for success, as a rule, had become so well-established, that I did not choose to risk a break-down of the case by mentioning the chance discovery I had made to even mine host of the Trafalgar. Nor, *à fortiori*, would I myself go to Richmond to meet with Richard Eldridge, otherwise Bouverie. That is to say, I would not go in such guise that he would recognise me as Clarke, the detective officer. There would need to be two of us; so I, after consulting with Webbe (a smooth-faced young fellow), resolved to go down as aged uncle and youthful niece. First, however, before going into the matter regardless of expense, as managers get up pantomimes, a trusty messenger was despatched to ascertain if Adolphus Bouverie, Esquire, was really at the Star and Garter. Yes, he was there; and so, very soon after that was known, were Mr. Josiah Romney and his showy niece, Miss Edwards. We both made up uncommonly well.

Mine host—he might not perhaps like to have his real name printed—mine host, I say, whom the prospect of being done out of twelve hundred pounds, and laughed at in the bargain, had worked up to a state of intense white-heat passion, had, I may remark, given me *carte blanche* as to expenses. There was no danger of my being recognised by Adolphus Bouverie, Esquire, if I sat next to him in the coffee-room, and politely intimated that when he had quite finished with the *Times* I should be glad to look at it. Now I had not the slightest idea that my gentleman and his co-conspirator were going to repeat the Trafalgar trick at a place so near London as Richmond; and especially before the trial (which could not be again postponed) had come off. I had no such stuff in my thoughts. But I was quite sure that there must be, at such an important crisis in their affairs, constant and frequent communication between the two worthies, by letters chiefly, but now and then by personal interviews—the whereabouts of which would be arranged by such correspondence. The deuce was in it, therefore, if Mr.

Romney and Miss Edwards could not make two—one, at all events—in observation of such conferences; and afterwards, by some pretence or other, acquire the right of officially, or officiously, ascertaining whether any illuminating MS. existed at Smith's lodging, as to how and where the plunder had been so cleverly disposed of. Failing that, the very fact that Smith *alias* Richards and Eldridge *alias* Bouverie were upon terms of confidential intimacy—an intimacy furtively, clandestinely, so to speak, carried on—would, weighted with other circumstances, tell strongly at the trial of the case upon the minds of the jury. There could be no doubt of that.

We were but just in time. A letter arrived for Adolphus Bouverie, Esquire, marked "Immediate and important." My niece, who expected to have found letters waiting for her at the Star and Garter, and who, seeing the postman approach the hotel, was waiting to ascertain if he had brought one or more for her, ascertained that fact. She had scarcely done so, when Mr. Bouverie (who had been out for a stroll, and who also must have

noticed the arrival of the postman) hurried into the hall, seized the letter, tore it open, glanced over its contents, and immediately gave orders to have a cab brought to the entrance, without delay.

Mr. Romney was seated in another cab some moments before Mr. Bouverie stepped into his, giving only aloud as he did so—supercautious gentleman (my niece was standing close by)—the vague direction of Waterloo Bridge, Strand end.

At the end of Wellington-street accordingly Mr. Bouverie alighted, so did Mr. Romney. Mr. Bouverie pushed on eastward on foot, the individual just then taking so much interest in him close at his heels. At last we reach Farringdon-street, where Mr. Bouverie enters a stationer's shop ; Mr. Romney does the same.

"How is Mr. Thompson after the accident he met with yesterday?" asks Mr. Bouverie of the gentleman behind the counter.

"Mr. Jones, I believe?"

"Yes; Mr. Jones, a friend of Thompson's."

"Just so. Mr. Thompson expects you. Your friend is better," added the gentleman, touching

a bell. "But the doctor says his nerves are much shaken. You can pass through into the passage, sir. The servant will show you to Mr. Thompson's room."

I purchased a few quires of notepaper; left; called a cab; was quickly set down at my lodging; was Clarke himself again in a few minutes; and, armed with a Crown subpoena for Smith *alias* Richards *alias* Thompson, was soon upon my return to Farringdon-street.

I alighted at the opposite side of the street, and watched for the exit of Mr. Bouverie from the stationer's. I had not long to wait; and after about a quarter of an hour had elapsed, entered the shop.

"Mr. Jones, who left Mr. Thompson a short time since, has commissioned me to deliver an important message to that gentleman."

"Certainly, sir. This way."

The many *aliased* gentleman certainly looked ill; and, perhaps because his nervous system had sustained so severe a shock, or that he knew me

by sight to be Clarke, the detective, regarded me with a wild, alarmed expression.

“I was present when you met with the accident in Cheapside yesterday, and helped to carry you into the tavern, Mr. Smith, otherwise Richards, now Thompson, and Heaven knows how many other pretty names! The confounded glass cut my wrist, as you see. Well, I am glad to find you look so well, considering; and will avail myself of the present opportunity of serving you with this subpœna, in the case of your friend Bouverie *versus* —, of the Trafalgar Hotel, Greenwich. I have also, it is only right to say, sent for the landlord of the Hummums, and expect him shortly. I must take the liberty, indeed, to wait till he *does* come. He is coming about a pair of trousers which a gentleman lost at his hotel; and is possessed of a strong fancy that you might be able to give some valuable information concerning that indispensable article.”

The doctor was quite right. The patient's nervous system had received a severe shock. How

he stared—shook—his teeth rattling like a pair of ill-played castanets.”

“Wha-at is—the—the—meaning of—of—this—eh—Mr. Clarke?”

“Well, I thought you knew me. The meaning, my dear sir, I take, briefly expressed, to be, *multum in parvo* you know, NEWGATE. That I think will be about the size of it. There is an infirmary, as you are no doubt aware, attached to that venerable institution, the doctors attached to which have great experience I am told in nervous cases. Your case evidently comes under that category. By-the-bye, Mr. Smith, or Mr. Richards, or—which is your favourite name? Never mind. That which we call a rose, by any other name would—the saying is a little stale, and the concluding word not critically appropriate. Never mind. At least, I don’t. I was about asking you if you had a glimpse of the Empress yesterday?”

I had often found that this sort of slang badinage had a very depressing effect upon rogues of Smith’s calibre. They think you would not be so *chaffy* if not quite sure of

having by some unaccountable means snared your game.

My friend remained silent with his tongue, but there was a world of eloquent expression in his quivering, dilated eyes. Words could not have more plainly said—I am in a state of horrible fright. What had I best do? Turn round upon Eldridge, or be led like a fool to the slaughter myself?

“That Hummums gentleman,” said I, looking at my watch, “must be here soon. Swiftly the unreturning moments fly, my friend. You have at the most but ten minutes. Not long, but quite long enough, if sensibly used.”

“What—what do you wish me to do?”

“Nothing, my dear sir. I have no *wish* you should do anything, make the slightest exertion for yourself, or—but I don’t know if there’s a family. Ah! there is a wife and babies, eh? No, indeed! No exertion is demanded of you. Being in such a nervous state, we shall support you carefully downstairs, and a cab will convey you at a gentle pace to the half-way house to Newgate,

alias—how those *aliases* run in my head—*alias* the Mansion House ; thence by a natural and easy transition to——”

“Mr. Clarke,” interrupted the patient, “let us have no more chaff. Tell me what I had best do.”

“No, thank you ; I would rather not. Opinions differ. But it would be a comfort to me, personally if you would tell me why you walked off with those trousers from the Hummums.”

“That was a foolish fancy of Eldridge’s. I wore them out over my own.”

“Ah ! That was it ! About the jewel casket at the Trafalgar ? But, mind, I don’t say it will do you good to tell me where that is.”

“It *is* safe enough, with a friend. But come, Mr. Clarke : since I do find myself talking plain to you, it can’t be robbery. The things were Eldridge’s, and honestly come by ; and I took them away by his direction. Newgate, indeed !—Why that’s arrant nonsense.”

“A long way off from being nonsense. Did you never come across, in your studies of the Newgate Calendar, such a phrase as ‘Felonious Conspiracy

to extort money?' However, now you have said your say, I will say mine; which is, that under the circumstances you have taken the best course possible for yourself. Meanwhile, distinctly understand that you are in custody. What ulterior measures may be taken will not depend upon me. And now I must telegraph to a niece of mine at the Star and Garter, Richmond.

"What! Why, you know everything!"

"To be sure I do. For example, I know that that trunk of yours—which you haven't been able to keep your eyes off for a minute together since I have been here—contains pretty things which Mr. Hancock would know again with half an eye."

"The devil take it. You are right. We are done for, that is quite clear. But Eldridge's friends—they are rich as Jews—will make it all square. His mother will; he knows that."

"Square here, square there. He will be presently, as you are, in custody."

I rang the bell and requested to see the master of the house. To him I briefly explained matters, and requested him to call in the first police-officer

he could see. That was done. Safe bind, safe find. There was no danger of Mr. Smith giving me the slip whilst I was gone to Richmond; thence, Mr. Bouverie first placed in hand-fast, to the Trafalgar.

Richard Eldridge's friends did make it square. At least, I have a right to suppose so. There was no prosecution of the culprits. Mine Host suddenly recovered his equanimity and good spirits; and him of the Hummums winked pleasantly when, chancing to meet him in the street, I asked if he had yet fathomed the mystery of those trousers.

RICHARD WATSON.

IN the paper entitled "A Detective in the Bud," I incidentally mentioned that my first police experience was obtained in aiding the escape from England of one Watson ;—the last was in myself escaping, considerably damaged and with much difficulty, from another Watson,—who, as I limp along the streets, I should (were it not that I brim over with the milk—cream, rather—of human kindness) devote at every broken stumble to the Infernal Gods. And much the rascal,—sitting, sipping, smoking in the Isle of France, I could swear, at this very moment, under the shade of a Calabash-tree, as I have read in a song that some great poet did (Moore, I think) would care for that ! He had become remarkably fond of cribbage, the villain ; it had grown to be a passion with him. It *is* so just now with me ; and *wouldn't* I like to give him one for his nob ? The cream of human kindness would not curdle at

that. Certainly not! On the contrary, it would smoothly overflow, to the extent of sixpence at the very least, upon the next *misérable* I might chance to meet.

Enough of preface to a very *misérable* story, viewed in relation to myself. How the mischief I could have been induced to engage in such an enterprise will ever remain a mystery to me. But the wariest of men do very silly things at times. I accept that consolation for what it is worth.

Richard Watson, it is pretty generally known, was held by those who firmly believed they knew him to have been from his youth upwards a model individual. A Hogarth "Good Apprentice,"—imposture, to culminate in a Lord Mayoralty. Pious, too. Oh! saintly pious! hymn-books, homilies, were his delight. Story-books he never opened—that is to say, was never seen to open; and he was presented with a gold watch, when but nine years of age, by an enthusiastic old lady, for having accurately reckoned up how many times a certain word—I forget what word—was mentioned in the New Testament. "The child's the father of the man;" and it is only fair to admit that till I had

been disastrously intimate with the man, I had no conception, though we lived in the same street and went for several years to the same schools, what an unutterable young hypocrite and villain the child must have been. The shadow of the abominable father, projected backward over the son, may cause me to view the boy Watson in a blacker light than he deserves. That may be the case; but I don't think so. At all events, the model boy grew up to be a model man; and it was at one time confidently asserted, and I believe with truth, that a statue—the cost of which was to be defrayed by a general subscription of all classes—commemorative of his genius, his virtues as a Christian, Citizen, Merchant Prince; not only as a “man and a brother,” in the large, universal, sense—but, individually, as a son, husband, father, uncle, nephew, cousin—all through the category of kinship, was to be erected in some conspicuous spot adapted for the display of such lying Effigies in stone, granite, marble, or bronze, as the case may be. Yes; I blush purple, when I make the admission,—I verily believe that if the statue

scheme had been set on foot before the gigantic bubble burst, I myself should have given my half-crown. Had I done so, that half-crown would now be running in molten silver through my veins.

The gigantic bubble *did* burst, suddenly, too ; and, good Heaven ! with what an awful crash ! It seemed that the end of the (City) world was come ! How well I remember how the dark whisper rose—gradually swelling into loud, fierce savage tones—accompanied by frightful maledictions—that Richard Watson, the eminent bill-broker, gigantic railway shareholder, director of companies innumerable, chairman of bank-boards, was *gone*—not only in a commercial, but in a literal sense ; had, in vulgar parlance, *sloped* to America it was presumed, carrying off with him an enormous amount of plunder, but leaving his family behind as a model legacy to an ungrateful country.

The failure, as all will remember who remembered Richard Watson himself, was for an awful amount ; the ruin entailed upon hundreds of families appalling. The exasperation of the

swindled creditors was, of course, extreme—wild, frantic! Not a penny in the pound would be realised. I participated in that passionate exasperation, having myself been a loser to the tune of eight hundred pounds.

This loss was the hook with which the father of mischief caught me. A committee of creditors was appointed—by whom it was determined to beat the rascal naked through the world; and that done, bring him home, and shut him for life in a model prison. He had gone to America—to New York; that could not be doubted. And who so well fitted to ferret out the villain and bring him to condign punishment as Henry Clarke, the detective, who had himself lost eight hundred pounds by the unmitigated scoundrel. It was at once agreed that I was the right man for the service; and a deputation, consisting of the chairman of the committee, called upon me to ascertain if I would undertake the business—the terms being all my expenses out of pocket to be paid in any case; and, should I succeed in bringing the villain back, my own debt of eight hundred pounds to be paid in full, with

two hundred over, making the pleasant round sum of one thousand pounds. I, after very brief deliberation, accepted the mission, provided the Commissioner consented ; and there was no doubt of that. The agreement was drawn up in due form—signed by the highly respectable chairman of the committee ; and I sailed in the *Hibernia*, for New York, on the 3rd of June, 1858.

I had no difficulty in finding Richard Watson in the Empire City. He was living in luxurious style at the Astor ; and a note from me was placed in his hands—for I thought it best to treat him with personal consideration—to put sugary salt upon his tail, so to speak, in order to render the capture of his wily birdship more certain and easy ; he being shielded with that most invulnerable of all armour—abundance of money.

O'Connell used to say he could drive a coach-and-four through any Act of Parliament which could be framed. I can easily believe that, provided the coach be a gold coach. At least, I know that if I had a heavy balance, to be drawn for at pleasure, in an American Bank, and there were a score of

British detectives at my heels, to claim me under the Extradition Treaty, I should, mentally—physical demonstration is quite superfluous when the game is won before the deal has gone round—I should mentally snap my fingers in their faces.

I was rejoiced, therefore, when Richard Watson ordered the black help to say he was quite ready to see Mr. Clarke ; and more rejoiced still when, rising as I entered the room from a luxurious chair, placed before one of the most luxurious spreads I have ever seen, he said, in a placid, meek, humble way, placing his outspread hand upon that peculiar region of the body where a heart (by a violent assumption) is always supposed to beat, he said, “Mr. Clarke, I appreciate the delicacy, the forbearance, with which you propose to execute the unpleasant duty with which you are charged. I shall give you no trouble. In proof of that, I have to inform you that *The Morning Star*, Captain Morgan (a three-masted ship), leaves New York for Bristol to-morrow ; that all my effects, valuables, moneys—except a trifle for current expenses—are on board ; and that I intended embarking in

her for England. I should not like, in my present mood of mind—a very humble, self-aborrent mood, Mr. Clarke—to encounter the rude boisterousness of a mail-steamer; rude, but innocent boisterousness, which would barb the fiery arrows of an accusing conscience. You will, perhaps, not object to that arrangement; your object, of course, simply being to get me back to England; there to receive my deserts. No, no; not my deserts! I may have to endure stripes, many stripes; but punishment equal to my sins, my crimes, this world *cannot* inflict. That will require the afflicting-rod of the Almighty! Oh, Mr. Clarke, Mr. Clarke! I am a miserable sinner—a miserable sinner! And I am glad that your arrival has put it out of my power to shrink from the duty of returning to England, and making my deluded, swindled creditors the only and very poor amends in my power—very poor amends, Mr. Clarke. But there is one sting, Mr. Clarke—one sting which pierces to the marrow—my wife and children—my innocent wife and children! To think of the shame, the ruin, the disgrace I have brought upon

them! Ah! there—there, Mr. Clarke, is the serpent-sting—the worm which dieth not!” And the reprobate sinner sobbed as if his cursed old leather heart—a force-pump apology of a heart—was going to break. I was positively quite moved; intimated my perfect willingness to sail with him in the *Morning Star*, and in every way consistent with my duty forbear to press heavily upon him. He thanked me, with tears in his eyes; said he would at once despatch a note to Captain Morgan, requesting him to prepare accommodation for another passenger. “Need I,” added that humbug of the first-water—“need I say that Mr. Clarke, the additional passenger, is a detective officer? But perhaps I ought,” he added, preparing his pen for an additional paragraph to his note. “Perhaps I ought. It is my duty to drink the cup of humiliation to the very dregs.”

“Write nothing of the kind, Mr. Watson. There is not the slightest reason that you should. No one on board the *Morning Star* need know that you are not returning to England for your own pleasure or business.”

“Bless you, sir! bless you, Mr. Clarke!” said the humbled man, fairly brimming over in bucketfuls. When I think of it—but never mind; at least, it’s of no use minding. “Bless you, Mr. Clarke! you are very kind, and I am unworthy of kindness.” He then folded, sealed, and despatched the note.

I have never since then, and I never completely shall recover my self-respect. That fellow (we went, as I said, to school together) must have early, looking through me, discerned the soft part, which he moulded as so much dough. I, too—Clarke, the detective—who, hundreds of people will tell you, can at any time see a hole through a millstone with both eyes shut. I am very glad I was obliged to leave the force—very. I could never have stood the “pious Mr. Richard Watson” chaff.

I partook of refreshment, rather heartily, indeed, with the specious villain; and he at times seemed for a moment or two to forget the deep damnation of his position, and soar into cheerfulness; but at the instant the spectre Memory confronted him

the hilarious smile was checked—he was again the humbled, repentant, remorseful sinner.

We went together on board the *Morning Star* by six o'clock next morning. Indeed, Richard Watson had made it a special request, asked as a particular favour, that I would not leave him for a minute. He was afraid of himself; that he should waver in resolution; seek to evade the retribution—a fearful, but salutary retribution—due to his crime and flight! That ever a sensible man, and a detective, should have been so humbugged, soft-sawdered by such flimsy balderdash as that, will, I repeat, be a mystery to me as long as I live. Perhaps in the human economy a man's brain may be temporarily softened for a few hours, now and then. I cannot tell how else it could have happened.

The *Morning Star* was a splendid ship, Captain Morgan a jovial sort of fellow, no more resembling the dried-up skin-and-bone, nasal Yankee skippers one meets with in Liverpool, than a ripe peach does a withered applejohn. He was, however, time-touched as to complexion; and no one

could be on the deck with him ten minutes without recognising a hardy, skilful sailor of service. There was a good deal of sly humour, too, in the expression of Morgan's face. I noticed it when I first stepped upon deck and was introduced to him by that son of Satan, Richard Watson, though I couldn't understand the sly, merry smile which glittered in his sharp, gray eyes at the moment. I soon did—very soon.

“I am shaking hands,” said I, “with an Englishman?”

“Yes,” replied Captain Morgan, “I was brought to bed in Newport, Monmouthshire—once, I believe, a Welsh, but long since an English, county. I have not, however, seen England for the last twenty years, and it may be another twenty before ——. Now then, look alive there,” he added, checking himself, and speaking as he walked forward to the men at the capstan: “look alive, or you'll be an hour bringing the anchor home.”

An odd remark, thought I, that: “it might be another twenty years before ——” he could not possibly mean before he again saw England! There

cannot be much danger for such a ship as this in a summer voyage across the Atlantic? Ah yes; he meant before he again saw Newport. Of course. I then went below to see about my berth and traps. Richard Watson had already disappeared.

I went on deck again in about an hour, and found the ship making splendid way, through a rough sea, at the rate of nine knots, Captain Morgan said. I remained above for a considerable time, and was holding on by the main chain to windward, for the deck sloped and was as slippery as the slate roof of a house, when the captain—who, like the rest of the seamen, kept his feet without holding on to anything, in a marvellous way to me—said, after a moment's look in my face:—"You had better go below, Mr. Clarke. Let me assist you. The ship is a little too lively just now for a landsman."

The captain helped me into my berth, which was a second-story one; that is, built above another, in the skipper's own cabin. It was a very nice affair; as much so at least as a confined, and in

summer stifling, hole can be : soft bedding, and damask curtains drawn before the opening.

Heavens ! how ill I was ! never surely before did vessel play such a dreadful game of pitch and toss. All my rancour revived against Richard Watson, who was quietly reading a newspaper, and no more affected by the ship's motion than the table at which he sat. Never mind. It was always the end which crowned the work. *He* was on his way to very pleasant pastures, and the thousand pounds were safe as if already in my pocket. Good Lord ! how that Hope, which is for ever telling flattering tales, is given to lying !

At length the demon of sea-sickness, having done his very worst, was pleased to permit me to fall asleep : a dozy unrest, that is to say, much due no doubt to the brandy-and-water I had sipped, and sometimes swallowed in desperate gulps, in the hope it would relieve the dreadful nausea under which I was suffering. I did not exactly sleep, though my eyes were closed, and my senses steeped in a sort of half-conscious forgetfulness. That state of animal being must have

lasted some hours ; and when I at last awoke, the good ship was evidently steady enough, pretty upright upon her keel. 'The nine knot breeze—gale I should have called it—had gone down, and it was night. But what is this noise of roaring merriment in the cabin, close to and below me ? I almost fancy myself at a Wapping rendezvous of sailors, as I often had been, upon detective duty, listening to one of their grindstone choruses, and half-stifled the while by thick clouds of tobacco-smoke. Evidently there is a bacchanalian revel in progress. Surely—but no, it's impossible that the voice roaring out—

“ When the jolly, jolly grog's afloat,
Fal the ral, the ral, the ral, the ral, the ray :
Begone dull care, shove off the boat,
Fal the ral, the ral, the ral, the ral, the ray.”

—“ One for his nob !—

“ When the jolly,” &c.

—it is absurd to imagine that voice can be that of the stricken sinner, Richard Watson. It passed the bounds of credibility that such a deeply contrite Christian should be playing cribbage, and enliven-

ing the intervals of the game by shouting vulgar sea-songs! A hot qualm, nevertheless, swept through my still inconstant stomach, as the conviction forced itself upon me that I was really wide awake, and the voice was unmistakeably that of Watson. A terrible apprehension tugged at my heart, knocked at my ribs, as the captain's enigmatical, unfinished sentence—"it may be another twenty years before"—recurred to me. A cold sweat broke out in every part of my body. Could it be possible that Clarke, the celebrated detective, had been ——

"Fifteen, two——"

Heaven and earth! That voice *was* Watson's! I *would* draw aside the curtain, though I so dreaded to realize the horrible suspicion which had flashed like lurid lightning across my brain, that I more than once withdrew my hand, stretched forth to draw back the concealing curtain.

"We pirates lead a jolly, jolly life,
Fal the ral ——"

The rattle of the rings, as I pushed aside the curtain and poked forth my head, caught the ear

of that sublimest of scoundrels, who looked up and burst, as he saw me, into a loud guffaw.

“Ah ! my noble Detective,” he shouted, “you’ve woke up at last, have you ? Here’s your health, old fellow, and hoping you may live till you die. —Gentlemen,” continued the audacious villain, addressing Captain Morgan and two others, the first and second mate of the *Morning Star*, as I afterwards knew, with whom he was playing at four-handed cribbage,—“Gentlemen, allow me to introduce to your particular notice the celebrated individual, whose head and shoulders, have, as we sailors would say, just hove in sight. Don’t, gentlemen, be misled by appearances. It is true he looks, just now, like a chap who has lost a sovereign and found sixpence ; but, gentlemen, as our copy-books tell us very truly, ‘Favour is deceitful and Beauty is vain ;’ for as sure as you live, that individual member of society, who doesn’t seem to be quite sure whether he is asleep or awake, is the celebrated Clarke, English detective, sent to New York upon a special mission to secure the person of my noble self, and convey me to

England and the Millbank Penitentiary, whereas he himself is now *en route* for the Isle of France in the Indian Ocean. Aint it delicious!" roared the rascal, echoing the applauding shouts of his fellows. "Aint it delicious though!—I say, old fellow," added the horrid reprobate, "don't turn all the colours of the rainbow, but leaving your damnable faces, come down out of that and take a hand with us. We have some capital cigars. O, you wont? Another time, eh?—All right. Now, Captain Morgan—it's your deal!"

Was there ever such a dreadful sell? And I! But words are vain: the situation paints itself.

Watson had heard of my arrival within ten minutes of my stepping upon the New York Quay. To take wing and fly to another State would involve the loss of the cargo of the *North Star*, which he had chartered for the Mauritius, where he intended to settle; he supposedly having relatives there, whom he had not indeed heard of since he was a boy, but to whom he intended introducing himself as a childless widower, who was

desirous of leaving his own bones where his mother got hers. He could not have readily here obtained a passage out, except by specially chartering a ship; beside which consideration, there was another. Arriving out as the owner of a cargo worth many thousands of pounds, and upon which a handsome profit would without doubt be realized, his perfect respectability would not be questioned for a moment. No suspicion that he was an adventurer, a fugitive, would be entertained. English newspapers rarely reached the Mauritius, and if they did, no one would imagine that Thomas Norton—the name of his mother's first husband—was the absconded bankrupt and swindler, Richard Watson. The "honour" of the officers of the *Morning Star*, who alone beside myself knew who he really was, might be depended upon.

The pressing question then was, how to avoid being arrested at my instance, by virtue of the warrant from the Home Office with which Richard Watson could not doubt I was armed; and, after some hesitation, he, confident in his genius for gammon, humbug, determined upon trying on the

dodge which so completely succeeded with me. I again say, that I have not since thoroughly regained my own self-respect. The specious scoundrel had, moreover, a keen sense of the ludicrous, and the idea of nabbing the famous detective sent specially out to nab *him*, tickled that sense amazingly. All this, and much more, he told me on our voyage out to the Isle of France.

Yes, to the Isle of France; to the Indian Ocean. That was a hard, literal fact.

“Upon my word, Clarke,” said the exasperating villain one day, when I, who was never given to show my teeth if I couldn’t bite, had become to all appearance acquiescent,—“Upon my word, Clarke, I think you will live to bless me for pioneering you to the eastern seas. Your frame, my dear fellow, evidently requires recruiting: the detective, vulpine intellect is no doubt as keen as ever, but the sword of the spirit would by its very sharpness have before long cut through and destroyed the scabbard of flesh, but for the strengthening influence upon the latter of a lengthened sea-voyage. Then, you will have an opportunity of visiting the scenes depicted

in the immortal pages of Bernardin St. Pierre ; where Paul and Virginia, you know, were pleasant in their lives and lovely, and in their deaths not divided, the corpse of the young lady having been, if I remember rightly, washed on shore, after she had refused, which I have always thought very silly of her, to be saved by a black man. The climate, too, is delicious ; the——”

“Cease your chaff, Richard Watson ; I am in no humour for it. You have won the first game, but the rubber is not played out.”

“I understand. Who, if not stone-blind, would *not*, when flashed upon by those clear, detective eyes, which never yet failed to pierce through the thickest mask of imposture ? Now, Clarke, *don't* fly off in that way. Remember Job, that patient man, who——”

“The devil fly away with Job and you too !”

“Mr. Clarke, the devil could *not* fly away with Job. Excuse me, but really your education in a scriptural sense appears to have been sadly neglected, whilst as to myself——”

“Who are, excuse *me*, the most consummate —— . Bosh ! What's the use of talking ?”

“Well, of use sometimes, my dear Clarke,—as, for example, at the Astor, when *I* talked with *you*. Bless the man, he’s off again! Now, let us talk *business*. When you made the remark, quite worthy of your proved sagacity—Lord! don’t wince so at trifles!—I say, when you made the remark that the rubber was not played out, and that consequently it was upon the cards that you might win the two next games—by-the-bye, you lost the game yesterday evening by stupidly pairing when our opponents wanted just six holes—you meant that you might win the two next games, the Mauritius being now a British possession, the governor a British general. That being so, it follows in rigorous sequence that the Home Secretary’s warrant to arrest Richard Watson, you yourself being able to prove that Thomas Norton is really Richard Watson, will be enforced by the British governor. The logic is irresistible, supposing the facts to be as stated, which, however, as to one all-essential item, does not happen to be the case.”

“What all-essential item? But I neither know nor care to know what you mean.”

“Yes, my dear Clarke, you *do* care to know what I mean. Candour is one of the highest virtues. Believe me, it is. I possess it in a high degree—fact, as I am about to prove to you ; but not being a marketable commodity, I have as a rule kept it concealed in a napkin. Hypocrisy, now,—which the great moralist teaches is the homage which Vice pays to Virtue—and I love to do homage to Virtue,—hypocrisy, I say, I have found to be a much superior article to deal in ; and this avowal in itself is, you must admit, a conclusive proof of my real possession of the virtue concealed in a napkin——”

“For Heaven’s sake, Mr. Watson, let’s have no more of this nauseating stuff. You think it very clever, I dare say ; I don’t, and it’s cursed aggravating besides.”

“Aggravating, yes ; that may be, under the peculiar circumstances. Clever, no. The spontaneous outpouring, my dear Clarke, of long pent-up sincerity, stifled under the conventionalism of a corrupt civilisation——”

“Oh, humbug ! Talk of *sea-sickness* indeed !”

"Now, now. Let us, as I said, talk business. You, by virtue of the Home Secretary's warrant, think it quite likely you will be able to put salt upon the tail of even such an old bird as I am, in the Isle of France. Just so; but then, my dear Clarke, I doubt you will be able to produce that warrant."

"Not produce the warrant! You have stolen it then?"

"No, no; not stolen it. That is a vulgar phrase. The wise 'convey it call.' You know Shakspeare, of course. What I mean is, that I do not think it is producible."

"I will soon see to that," I replied, in a white heat of rage, bolting off to the cabin as I spoke. Sure enough, every paper, every letter I possessed had been taken from my valise. I had no means, none whatever, of proving that I was an English detective officer; but slightly of use as that would be. What was to be done—what could be done? I was in the toils, that was quite clear; and to free myself, it was imperative to make terms, to knock under, in fact.

Needs must when a certain black gentleman drives.

"Mr. Richard Watson," said I, rejoining him upon deck, "you have won the rubber! I acknowledge myself beaten. That being so, and as I suppose you have no particular grudge against me personally, there can be no objection to speaking the first vessel bound for Europe we may meet, and sending me on board of her?"

A strange expression glinted over the fellow's dark face. Some new idea had suddenly, as it seemed, surged up to the surface, from the dark depths of the scoundrel's soul.

Still the fellow was not all bad. If he could reconcile my safety with his own, he would do so gladly. If not, why then——.

"Mr. Clarke," said he, after walking about the deck for perhaps ten minutes,—“Mr. Clarke, let us understand each other. I am in a peculiar position. It would have been well for both of us if you had reached New York one day later than you did. However, we must make the best of the case as it stands. You cannot arrest me when the *Morning*

Star reaches her destination. That is quite clear. But you may damage my character there : give out that my name is Watson, not Norton ; that I am really the fraudulent stockbroker, &c. Now, that would be very unpleasant."

"No doubt of it, Mr. Watson. Why not then prevent the possibility of my saying anything that may suggest suspicion of your real character by, as I said, speaking the first homeward-bound ship, and packing me off to Europe?"

"Well, yes ; but there are breakers ahead. I am, it is true, now safely on my way to the Isle of France ; but there are, I say. breakers ahead even in that direction. I am desirous, after the storms and toils of life, to settle quietly down in my Indian home, sit under my own vine and fig-tree, none daring to make me afraid. The prospect is a charming one, but, like all charming prospects, it may be suddenly and disastrously darkened, blotted out. I must guard against that. I must confess to the commission of a grievous error, of a stupid oversight. In the flurry of triumphant exultation at having outwitted the famous London

Detective, it did not cross my mind that it was almost equally important as escaping from New York to keep my destination unknown to you. It would have been best to have sent you back to New York with the pilot when off Sandy Hook. Tush ! What a fool I am to prate in that way ! You would know where the ship had cleared for ; and if you had not been told before, the pilot would have let it out, and the Yankee Customs people would have had no objection to inform you of where the *Morning Star* would finally bring up.

“ No,” said Watson ; “ this blunder having been committed, there really was, there really is, no absolute security to be obtained but by — the observation will sound unpleasantly—but by consigning Mr. Detective Clarke to a watery tomb, a sea sepulchre.—There, now, don’t fly into fits and look as if you were going to fling me to the fishes first. I was merely stating the case from a strictly logical point of view. There is no intention of acting upon that deduction of strict logic. None whatever. I myself have a strong objection—I do not say an insuperable objection—to extreme mea-

tures. A foolish feeling it may be, but all men have their weaknesses. Captain Morgan, besides, would, I have no doubt, object decidedly to such a proceeding, however indispensable to self-safety I might consider it. The question thus arises as to the most effectual alternative. I suppose," added the scoundrel, in whose eyes, spite of the jocular, bantering air and tone he assumed, I thought I discerned the shadow, the fluttering, unconfirmed shadow as I may express it, of a tiger-purpose hesitatingly shaping itself into form in his soul, "I suppose Mr. Clarke will have no objection to pledge his word and honour that, under no circumstances, however pressed by temptation, he will disclose, will let fall a hint, that Richard Watson has replanted his roof-tree in the Mauritius?"

As Watson uttered these last words, Captain Morgan came on deck. One keen look in that blithe face showed me that in no conceivable case would Morgan lend himself to the commission or permission of the crime of murder. That instinctive conviction decided me as to how I ought to act.

“Captain Morgan,” I exclaimed, “a word with you. This man, Richard Watson, threatens, in pretended jest, but the threat is real enough,—will grow to be real, at all events, before we reach the Isle of France—threatens to have me flung to the fishes, in order that he may the more certainly escape paying the penalty of his crimes.”

“A very natural desire,” laughingly replied the captain; “few people like to pay such penalties. As to flinging you to the fishes,” added Morgan, looking sternly at Watson, “that is all flam. He knows that well enough. I would go a long way to serve Richard Watson, for, whatever he may be to others, he has been a fast friend to me, but not the length of murder, nor one step on the road; he knows that quite well.”

Watson protested, in indignant language, that he had merely jested, and I must have known such was the case. He, for all that, insisted that I ought, as the price of being saved from any further annoyance, to pledge my word and honour not to divulge the name of his place of refuge. Morgan thought so too; and feeling there was something

dangerous in Watson, against which, circumstanced as I was, it might be impossible to effectually guard, I gave the required pledge. That pledge or promise extended to not mentioning Watson's name to any person in the Isle of France. As some set-off, Watson, counselled to do so by Morgan, promised to hand me my eight hundred pounds on the day I should re-embark for England. Whether this might have been for other motives than any affecting myself I know not, neither can I say, what disinclined the captain of the *Morning Star* to speak too closely a home-ward-bound ship. We passed sufficiently near perhaps a dozen vessels with whom it would have been easy to communicate. The names of the ships and other trifling, unimportant intelligence interchanged, but it was not once asked if a passenger for Europe could be received on board. Such persistence in keeping me a close prisoner as long as possible was, I could have no doubt, due to Mr. Richard Watson, and him only. He was fast loading me with obligations, which I much feared I should never find an opportunity to requite.

The *Morning Star*, with my unfortunate self on board, arrived safely at the Isle of France. Richard Watson realized largely by his speculative cargo, and at once established himself as a commercial magnate of the first rank. He was very friendly, very civil to me, in outward appearance, though there was a lurking devil in the fellow's green-grey eyes that never slumbered. He feared and hated me with all the ferocious yet shrinking malignity of an utterly unprincipled, sensual, coarse coward. It had been agreed that I should return to America in the *Morning Star*. Several opportunities presented themselves of leaving for Europe in other vessels, but Watson declining to hand over the eight hundred pounds till I left in the *Morning Star*, which was undergoing extensive repairs, I suppld* my mind to remain till she sailed, feeling sure meanwhile that he had some sinister design in so detaining me. I said so more than once, and distinctly warned him that any attempt at foul play, which I should, with Morgan's help, who was as one with me to that extent, be pretty sure to baffle, would at once absolve me

from my promise to keep silence as to his antecedents.

Full five weary months limped tediously away before the *Morning Star* had completed her repairs and embarked her cargo. I had no doubt Watson purposely delayed her departure. The beautiful climate, cheapness of luxuries, fine tropical scenery, correctly enough described by Saint Pierre, did not in the least reconcile me to compelled inaction. I was eating my heart away with baffled rage. And Richard Watson, who had as easily put off the devil-may-care, rollicking, reprobate character which he had assumed on ship-board as he had previously disencumbered himself of the sleek, sanctimonious disguise which he had worn in England, had been for some time developing into a new state of moral, or rather immoral being. The perils in his path, instead of completely clearing away, loomed into daily more menacing shapes. There were strange whispers afloat concerning him; and, though French Creole society is not particular to a number of shades, he was not received with that

respectful cordiality which he had at first experienced. Perhaps one or more of the officers of the *Morning Star* had babbled of matters they had been heavily bribed and had sworn to conceal. Then he did not appear to suspect of treachery; me he certainly did. Destitute of the slightest spark of honour himself, he could not bring himself to believe that such a sentiment was strong enough to resist the impulses of resentment—of pecuniary temptation. The idea had obtained possession of his mind that I had despatched one or more letters through the Post-office to England. Such an expedient, but for my promise, was open to me; and had I done so Mr. Richard Watson might at a very early day find himself in the close custody of a French Police-officer. Such an apprehension was no doubt disquieting, and Mr. Richard Watson, under its influence, had become intensely savage, morose, gloomy. He talked the matter over from time to time with Skipper Morgan, who felt confident, and told him so, that I should keep my word, in spirit as well as literal fact. Besides, there was the sum

of eight hundred pounds at stake. Would any one in my social position fling that up for the gratification of a feeling of revenge? Nonsense! Mr. Watson was scaring himself with shadows!—Mr. Watson was not so sure of that! However, time would show.

The cure for all that natural inquietude would seem to be an easy one. Richard Watson, *alias* Thomas Norton, had but to embark with his ill-gotten wealth for some other part of the world, leaving no trace behind, and he might sleep in spite of thunder—of the thunder of this world at all events—not perhaps of that which rolls, reverberates, in dreams.

But there were difficulties in the way of doing so—obstacles of his own creation. In the first flush of exultation consequent upon his safe arrival in the Isle of France, his warm reception by his mother's family, who could not sufficiently honour their rich English relative, he had purchased a large, indeed a splendid estate, which chanced to be put up for sale, and to re-dispose of it so soon would not only appear to be a strange act of

caprice, but involve great pecuniary loss. Then Mr. Richard Watson liked the climate—the Isle of France society. It was, in short, a sensuous Paradise from which he would not willingly be driven.

And some time before the five months elapsed, it suddenly turned out that the fraudulent bankrupt was perfectly safe, so far as personal safety was concerned, in the Mauritius. By some recognised interpretation of a clause in the treaty of cession by France to England, it is held that the British Governor cannot deport, under any pretence whatever, any one who owns a portion, however small, of the soil. This discovery was made by Richard Watson, as I understood, by a casual conversation with a Creole lawyer. The worst peril which appeared to threaten Watson had vanished—was, in fact, no peril at all. But English creditors might give powers of attorney to their agents, who could proceed against Richard Watson in the Civil Courts for the recovery of their debts. The contingency might, however, be provided against by one of those colourable transactions which are

common to all countries. The estate was pretendedly sold—that is, it was legally transferred to a maternal relative of Watson's, who could not of himself have raised one hundred pounds for the purchase of the fee-simple of his own salvation. The transaction was moreover, as I gathered from Captain Morgan, perfectly safe for Watson himself. The relative, if he ever wished to do so, would not be able to cheat Watson out of the property. It was only the fraudulent bankrupt's English creditors that the simulated sale would be potent to defraud. It was also arranged that any occasional ventures which the newly-imported capitalist might engage in should be carried on in another name. This was easily understood. "But why the mischief," exclaimed I, after hearing it all explained by Captain Morgan—"why the mischief then, Watson's business being squared, doesn't he hand over my eight hundred pounds and let me be off? I have honourably fulfilled my part of the bargain."

"You have, Clarke: I never for one moment doubted that you would. But you see, Watson, who

I must admit does not much care to part with money when not law-obliged to do so, does not see the necessity—and we had only about an hour ago hot words upon the subject—the absolute necessity, under the changed aspect of things in general, of shelling out that eight hundred pounds.”

“I thought so. Well, that piece of scoundrelism absolves me from my promise, at all events. I shall at once write out the whole history of the Watson-Norton swindle, transmit it to the Governor, and ask for an audience. There is a brig, a French vessel, in the harbour—*L'Eclair*, I think, is her name, which will clear in a few days for one of the French ports. I shall have no difficulty in obtaining a passage in her; and when I once see old England again, won't I—that's all, won't I——”

“You would play old Harry with Watson if you could, I have no doubt of that; and small blame to you, remembering how you have been served. But I don't see how you can do him any real mischief. Upset his already tottering position in society here—tumble him into the mire of contempt! Yes, for a time; but money—money, Mr.

Clarke, is a splendid sponge with which to wipe out the records of peccadilloes from the slate of life. The notion of driving a very rich man from society is simple nonsense. I am only a rough seaman, not much used to land-folk's ways; but I know that must be true. So let that hare sit, as we used to say in Monmouthshire. Still, you have got him upon one tack. Hark," cried Morgan, stopping suddenly—"hark! No, it can't be Watson's sneeze in the next room. I myself saw him off, a quarter of an hour since, to Le Bocage, his nephew's dwelling. Well, now, how about this? You have one cable that won't part; which is, that if he don't down with the dust as to the eight hundred-pounds, you could, upon getting to England, put Watson's wife and family up to coming out here. Now that, between you and me, would be wormwood, gall, brimstone, hell-fire. That's the point, Clarke, you've got to steer by, and I hope you will weather the fellow—I do really—I don't like his ways in many things. Says you: 'Look here, Richard Watson, you're all safe from the creditors. That's made, I understand, all safe. Blow high,

blow low, you'll ride safe and easy at anchor, as regards *them*. But about Mrs. Richard Watson and the kids? Why, they'd be out here, it stands to the reason of things, if I once let on about you in England. But here it is again: You hand over them eight hundred pounds, and I solemnly promise never to say that I have seen you, and Captain Morgan will go bail that I keep my word.' ”

“ Much obliged to you, Captain Morgan ; but I must pursue my own course. There is an *esprit de corps* in the Police Force, quite as strong as that which pervades the ranks of men armed with a bayonet instead of a batôn. I shall not betray my trust for eight hundred, nor thrice eight hundred pounds. The promise I gave, under duress—upon honour—I have fulfilled. I am not now subject, or liable to be subject, to such duress ; and, though not at all pretending to superhuman virtue—I have indeed no doubt that my figure in the sublime scale of transcendental morality is a low one—I being released from the pledge I gave, never will renew it. You sail three days hence. Whither ? ”

“Don’t ask foolish questions. For No Man’s Land, if you must know. You don’t mean to be a passenger?”

“No, I think not ; but I do think, Captain, that the sneeze you heard was Mr. Richard Watson’s. He was listening, be sure of it.”

“That may be, certainly. Well, mind your con : there are breakers ahead and around, and I wish you well.”

I had lodged during the greatest portion of those five months at a superior kind of chaumière, or cottage, just without the South Barrier. I suppose all French towns have barriers, and the Mauritius is emphatically French. The occupiers of the cottage were Jean and Fanchette Quesnel. They were decent people enough, and tenants of Richard Watson. The cottage and grounds adjoining formed part of his recently purchased estate. It was a very modest domicile. The second floor—it happened to have two storeys did that cursed chaumière—the second floor, where I slept, was not more than about twelve feet from the ground—twelve feet, too much.

I sat up till the small hours of the morning, writing out the statement or memorial which I the next morning intended forwarding to the Governor. Jean and Fanchette Quesnel were very quiet, exemplary folk ; but on that night there seemed to be a strange stir below. There was, or my ears deceived me, the tread of stealthy steps. I could now and then, too, hear voices—subdued voices ; and though it was more than half-past two by my watch when I finished writing, there were still voices whispering below—I fancied so at all events. The wind, perhaps ! It might be so. The vague apprehension by which I was possessed gave possibly a significance to those sounds not properly belonging thereto. True ; but before lying down in my clothes—yes, certainly in my clothes—I would look heedfully to the priming of my pistols.

To the priming ! Yes ! And the loading of the pistols must be looked to. By heaven and earth ! there were no bullets in the barrels. They had been withdrawn ! By Richard Watson's emissaries ; there could be no question of that.

I had carefully reloaded the pistols; and as nothing better could be done, I would just lie down, and keep my eyes wide open.

I had half dozed off when the creaking of the crazy door awakened me. Four negroes stole in, gazed eagerly in the direction of the pallet upon which I lay; and behind them, the door being at last wide opened, I perceived the face of Richard Watson. The negroes were armed with knives and pistols. There could be no doubt as to what was intended; and, though the blood seemed to retreat from my heart, I endeavoured to nerve myself for the encounter. The window was open: I took note of that fact, thinking the distance to the ground could not be more than about eight feet. It was twelve feet, as I had occasion to know.

On came the creeping, black assassins—each with a pistol in one hand, a knife in the other. Now, Henry Clarke, if you would save yourself, you must be swift and deadly. I *was* swift and deadly. I lay apparently fast asleep. The slight unclosing of my eyelids, which showed me the assassins with

sufficient distinctness, did not intimate that I was wide—ay, very wide awake. They close upon me! In half a minute—in much less than half a minute—those hired knives will do their work! Bang! Bang! I have fired close in the faces of two of the negroes! I do not wait to clearly ascertain the precise effect of the fire. I hear screams—the fellows stagger back; and amidst the smoke, bewilderment, and confusion, I leap out of bed—out of the window! My right leg is broken! My left ancle cruelly strained! I am crippled—lost! Yes, but for God's gracious providence. Captain Morgan, for some reason which he never divulged to me—possibly it was a vague surmise—(yet that could hardly be, or he would not have been at the spot in the very nick of time)—Captain Morgan believed that Watson intended to relieve himself of me, for good and all, that night; but he hardly knew how to act decisively, and prowled round the chaumière with three armed seamen, undetermined with respect to the right course to pursue. Break into the cottage, seize Watson and

the blacks ! That would be a desperate move. No, he would wait and watch.

The report of my pistols brought him and his men to the rescue. What passed I only knew from after-report, and Morgan was shy of speaking upon the subject. The result was that I was borne off to the harbour, berthed on board the *Morning Star*, carefully attended by the ship's surgeon, and finally arrived in London, *via* New York, in good bodily health, but a cripple. "Sic transit gloria *Clarke*."

Mrs. Richard Watson was dead ; had died some two or three months before I reached England. The sons and daughters have probably joined their father. The creditors made no further stir in the matter. *Cui bono* ? And, of course, I lost my eight hundred pounds.

I regularly subscribe to *L'Orient*, a weekly newspaper printed in the French language, in the capital of the Isle of France, and always eagerly peruse its domestic news and *faits divers*. Surely, some of these days I shall light upon a paragraph setting forth in large type, with a

mourning border, that the eminent English capitalist, and liberal patron of all good and generous works, Thomas Norton, Esquire, has met with a lamentable, fatal accident—fallen over a precipice and broken both his legs (I should be content with that), or have hanged, drowned, or shot himself! I don't think I should care to go so far as that. The legs—both legs though—would satisfy me. Well, there's the story. My first paper was on "A Detective in the Bud!"—I think this should have been headed, "A Detective Done."

ONE NIGHT IN A GAMING HOUSE.

THE last paper ("Richard Watson,") though the last of my "Detective Experiences," cannot be, I find, the last printed narrative in this book. More copy is required, and I again examine my notes in search of adventure—successful adventures—as before said, I ignore my failures as a rule—successful adventures, enterprises, *ruses*, whatever you may choose to call them, likely to interest or amuse the reader. First, I select the story which I entitle "One Night in a Gaming House." In writing out my notes, I of course much amplify them from memory, with more or less correctness. Memory, the warder of the brain, is not always strictly faithful at my age.

There is a very respectable tavern, as thousands know, called the *Peacock*, not many doors distant from the Angel, Islington. There used to be

perhaps there is now, a free-and-easy sing-song meeting there every Thursday evening. Very dull and stupid are, to my taste, sing-song, free-and-easy assemblages. The guests are there to hear themselves sing, as they fondly imagine they are doing when moaning forth their doleful strains. One vocalist at the Peacock greatly amused me. He was a stalwart coal merchant, a grim wiry fellow, of immense calibre, with a face resembling a coarse piece of very brown holland, crumpled up and stiffened by having been starched and put away damp. That gentleman always sung, with a voice suggestive of a coarse nutmeg-grater rubbing upon a grindstone, and a hurdy-gurdy, "I'd be a butterfly,"—always concluding amidst great applause. I mention this in order that it may be understood I did not go to such meetings from choice.

I attended by special order—not constantly, but whenever I had leisure and nothing of more importance demanded my presence elsewhere. A slippery gentleman of the name of Warren—Antony Warren—used to frequent the Peacock

on those evenings, confident that he would be called upon to sing "Alice Gray" and the "Banks of Allan Water." This gentleman the people at Scotland-yard strongly suspected to be something worse than a common cheat of the first magnitude in the lower line of predatory life. That he was well known to be. His manner of effecting the trick at cards known as "*sauter la coupe*,"—the legerdemain (now re-baptized Presdigiteur) of which the Premier Baron of England, De Ros, was not many years ago convicted, in a court of law,—was first-rate. But card-cheating—the people with whom he played being usually half-a-crown the rubber, sixpenny point gamesters—would not keep up Antony Warren, Esquire's, establishment in Barnsbury Park. Three servants, a boy in buttons, and a pony chaise could not be maintained upon such small gains as that small cheating would net. We had our own ideas upon the subject—by we, I mean in this case, the Scotland-yard chiefs—we had our ideas upon the subject, and an order was booked in the Diary of Instructions to Constables, that Clarke was

to look after Antony Warren, a common cheat, but suspected of being a villain of a much higher class.

Well, I *did* watch, when occasion served, Antony Warren, Esquire. I first observed that he courted the company—assiduously courted the company of three young men, whose names I afterwards ascertained to be Henry Turle, Ernest Sherry, and Sidney Sherry. I scrutinized these young men minutely, and soon made up my mind as regarded *them*. Antony Warren, Esquire, was, in seeking to strike up an intimacy with them, sowing his seed upon very stony ground. At least, I judged so; but it was as well to watch, if only for the sake of the young men themselves. They interested me. One, Henry Turle,—of course, he like all others, came to hear himself warble—did not in the least resemble his two young friends. A dark-complexioned, small-featured, good-looking chap enough—and sang a very good song,—exceedingly good—refreshingly good, when contrasted with that dreadful “I’d be a Butterfly!” Ernest Sherry’s was, however, *the* song of the evening, whenever these young men chanced to drop it. His “Lost Child” was

really first-rate. I have never heard it sung so well "upon any stage." It was some compensation for the stifling smoke of the sing-song room. The other young man, Sidney Sherry, appeared to be in some sense a martyr, going there to hear his brother and Henry Turle sing—a kind of family obligation, for, as I afterwards heard, Sidney Sherry and a sister or cousin of Henry Turle were about to contract matrimony. That might or might not be, and was at all events no business of mine. The young men were, I noticed, very abstemious, seldom exceeding a glass of ale each; and the youngest, Sidney, though not a singer—at least, I did not hear him sing—a handsome chap enough, like his brother, knew how many beans made five, if ever young or old man did, or I was greatly mistaken. Then, what could Antony Warren, Esquire, mean by so persistently waiting, as it were, upon those young men? they, quite evidently, knowing nothing about him.

Several months passed. I had made my observations, collected and collated certain *data*

regarding Antony Warren, Esquire. Those observations, that collection of facts—shadowy facts, some of them—decided me to call upon Mr. Henry Turle. The two Sherrys were with him.

“Mr. Henry Turle!” said I, plunging at once *in medias res*, “Mr. Henry Turle; I am a detective-officer: my name is Clarke—Henry Clarke!”

“Detective be hanged,” rejoined Mr. Henry Turle. “What do I care about detectives?”

“Personally, nothing. That is beyond question. But you are from Taunton, Somersetshire?”

“Yes; and what of that?”

“This of that. When a sister or cousin of one of these young gentlemen passed in her bridal tour through Taunton, the bridegroom introduced to his bride one Martin Lobb, a young man of good expectations?”

“Yes, yes. Well?”

“That young man and you, Mr. Henry Turle, became fast friends?”

“Yes. And again I ask, what then?”

“Mr. Antony Warren, a loose sort of person, hanging about the skirts of Somersetshire society, happening to be at the hotel where the young

married couple stopped, contrived in some way to introduce himself to them and to you?"

"Right again. But what of this?"

"You will presently understand. Mr. Martin Lobb has since come into a large sum of money—over fifteen thousand pounds. Soon after he obtained actual possession of the legacy he came to London, where he had no acquaintance except yourself,—a fact known to Mr. Antony Warren. That chevalier d'industrie also knew, through you, that Mr. Lobb had not only large funds at his disposal, but had a strong passion or propensity for gaming. And you, knowing that, but not knowing, not suspecting, what an irredeemable rascal he is, viewing him merely as an agreeable fellow, who could sing 'Alice Gray,' &c., thump the table with both fists in applause of your friend Mr. Ernest Sherry's 'Lost Child,' introduced or re-introduced him to Mr. Lobb. I have, however, more than once fancied that this young gentleman,"—motioning towards the youngest of the trio,—“that this young gentleman reckoned up Antony Warren, Esquire, more accurately.”

"I never liked the man," said Mr. Sidney Sherry; "never felt the slightest confidence in him."

"So I imagined. The upshot is, Mr. Turle, that, thanks to your introduction or re-introduction, Antony Warren, Esquire, has already eased your friend Mr. Lobb of ten out of his fifteen thousand pounds."

"Good ! Is it possible ?"

"Not only quite possible, but perfectly true. But never mind that. Let the dead bury their dead. Our concern is with the future. One remarkable feature in the case, so far as I have hitherto been able to spell it out, is that this Antony Warren is himself the dupe as well as tool of a knot of scoundrels of, it may be, a deeper dye than himself. Well, to-morrow evening, as I understand, the swindle is to be consummated. There is to be play upon a magnificent scale; the end of which will be, that your friend Lobb will be completely cleared out. Now, you can help me to prevent this, and at the same time confer an immense benefit upon a credulous, most unfor

fortunate, well-deserving widow, whom the prince of swindlers, by whom your friend Lobb is being victimized, has reduced from comparative opulence to penury.”

Mr. Henry Turle would gladly assist me, most gladly, if he could see how he could do so effectually.

“I will tell you how. It is necessary that I and a few friends of mine—one will do—should be present at the gaming-table to-morrow evening. One person will be there who is particularly ‘wanted’ by the police, and who has successfully dodged them for the last six months or more. I do not mean the ‘Alice Gray’ gentleman, though his name, strongly underlined, is in our Detective List. Now, though we in a general way are familiar with the ‘haunts’ of these fellows, we are not sure—are never sure—of being able to drop upon them *quietly*, at the right time. They are old birds whom it is very difficult to snare, cleverly as you may spread your nets. We know the house—the ‘hell,’ I should say—where the final ruin of your friend Lobb is to be accomplished. But it is

almost impossible that we—we detectives I mean—can surprise and seize them in the fact of swindling play. We knock at the door ; a livery servant answers through the door—opening permitted by a chain. We cannot give the *mot d'ordre*, the password,—he makes some agreed-upon communication with a bell, to the people at play, then lets you in ; and by that time, for any good you can do, it would have been as well to remain out. Now, Mr. Lobb *must* have the password for to-morrow night, and I wish you to bring him here to speak with me ; here, or at any other place you may appoint. I don't want to be seen spying about Jermyn-street. It is somewhere near that classic spot he lodges, I know ; for although neither Mr. Lobb nor the persons with whom he is at present linked in discreditable fellowship know me personally, there are plenty of fellows about there who do ; and it might be soon made known to the swindlers who propose plucking him of his last feathers that Clarke, the detective, was on the watch and close at their heels."

Mr. Turle and his young friends, who were "

plainly much concerned for their friend, heartily agreed to my proposition. Mr. Turle went off at once to seek Lobb. I was to await his return with, if possible, that four-fifths-plucked and extremely-green goose himself.

Mr. Turle was gone about three hours, and I was becoming impatient, when a cab drove up to the door, and I was presently introduced to Mr. Martin Lobb. A genteel, placid, wine-and-watery-looking individual was young Mr. Lobb. He had weak, grey eyes. Grey eyes when keen and clear are the infallible index of a keen, clear intellect; when weak and quivery, the equally infallible indication of nervous flexibility, so to speak, of a flexile will, to be moulded as wax by stronger minds. That is my experience, at all events.

I knew at once not only with whom I had to deal, but how to deal with him.

“Mr. Lobb, you have heard from your friend Mr. Turle that I am Clarke, the detective-officer. You have, I happen to know, been cheated out of about ten thousand pounds by a person calling himself Antony Warren, and another equally estimable

gentleman who goes by the name of Richards. There are others in the gang, but Richards is the villain-in-chief. Do you, Mr. Lobb, so far agree with me?"

"I cannot say that I do. Certainly, I have had a terrible run of ill luck; but the tide, however strongly it may set against you—a common occurrence—as suddenly turns. I feel persuaded that I shall have my revenge to-morrow evening."

"So do I; but not after the mode and fashion which you contemplate. If I and a friend of mine be not present at the play to-morrow evening, you, Mr. Lobb, will be a shelled peascod; that is to say, your pockets will be to let, and not worth hiring—those of Richards full to bursting with the last instalment of your spoils."

"I know no one of the name of Richards. Really this——"

"Tut! You may not know the name. The rascal has a thousand, more or less; but you know the man. I will give you his portrait, in words only, but that will be sufficient: He is about my own height; his hair is sandy-red, his whiskers (pussy-

cat whiskers) of a pale sand-colour. He is slightly pock-marked ; but the distinguishing characteristic (for there are thousands of men with sandy-red hair and light sand-coloured whiskers in London) is that he has a small, hairy mole on his right cheek, which he is every moment rubbing."

"Winthrop, as I'm alive! the prince of good fellows!"

"Winthrop, eh? That is his present name *deieu* is it? Now, I want your help, your hearty help, to bring one of the most infamous scoundrels in the world to book—to justice I would say, but that I fear is out of the question. Justice, I fear, will never be dealt out to him till the day of Final Judgment for all of us. But to book he may, you assisting, be brought; and that you may render me the more willingly that hearty help, I will tell you a short story. It will not detain us long:

"Frank Jameson is the real name of the man whom you know as Winthrop. This is his history in little: He was a railway clerk in Exeter, and speedily acquired the reputation of a very *smart* young man—smart in the American sense of the

word. This reputation enabled him to surprise the confidence, as it were, of a number of simple persons who had money to place, or gamble with. Of course, Mr. Jameson promised exorbitant interest for the money placed—certainty of success to those who confided in him to make their bets in horse-racing. He is no common rascal, this Jameson *alias* Winthrop. I will give you a proof that he is not: You may remember the Derby when a horse called Cossack won, many years ago, I think in 1848 or 1849. He had prophesied that Van Tromp would win (confidently prophesied), assuring the people whom he persuaded to back Van Tromp (making him the medium for effecting their bets) that he knew, from private confidential information, that Van Tromp had been made safe to win; and when the news arrived by telegraph that Cossack had won (Van Tromp was second or third, if I remember rightly), great was the consternation amongst the small betting folk in Exeter who had intrusted their ‘little goes’ to his judgment and discretion. It had been arranged that the ‘settlement’ should take place at the Red Lion,

Exeter, two or three days after the race. Well, the betters met, as agreed, and with very wry faces we may be sure. In came Jameson, bright and smiling: ‘Gentlemen, I need not tell you that Van Tromp has not won the Derby. Of course I need not. Well, gentlemen, I heard that Van Tromp would *not* win four days before the race came off—private information of course. I kept dark naturally, having other men’s moneys to account for. So I quietly hedged every bet, and went the whole hog upon Cossack. The sum total of it all, gentlemen, is that your forty-two pounds have become ninety-six pounds, and that here is the tin.’ Now, Mr. Turle, Mr. Sherry, that was all flam.—The money entrusted to him was lost; and we (I mean Scotland-yard and Company) are perfectly satisfied in our own minds that a money-parcel (one hundred and nine pounds in sovereigns) forwarded to a wealthy miller of Exeter, which by some accident never reached its destination, furnished the ninety-six pounds.

“This throwing a sprat to catch a salmon—a rather large sprat, by the way—succeeded; and the

end was, other dodges helping, that Frank Jameson so ingratiated himself with the people of Exeter that he ultimately left that city in possession of, as far as can be clearly ascertained, about five thousand pounds, entrusted to him for investment. The thing seems incredible, but for all that is unquestionably true. Of this, under the circumstances, immense sum, two thousand three hundred pounds were entrusted to him by a widow (Mrs. Polding). She had a large family, and was anxious to purchase a business in London—a tavern business. Jameson knew of one that would precisely suit her. Of course he did. A business worth double, treble that sum, but which he, having peculiar facilities, could obtain for the cash the widow had at her command. Luckily, we have his handwriting in a hastily-written note, which proves he received this money for that distinct purpose, and that the tavern business to be purchased was no other than that of the Saracen's Head, Snow-hill.

“*Litera scripta manet,*’ the written thing remaineth ; and if we could only catch the scoun-

drel, he is, we hope, done for. Arrived in London, he associated himself with sharpers, blacklegs of every hue and pattern ; is thought to be rich, but somehow always evades the pursuit of the police. It is only very lately, by-the-by, that we have been put upon his trail ; and even now we must go very warily to work, it being doubtful whether he has or has not brought himself within the clutch of the criminal law. Of his moral delinquency there cannot, however, be the slightest doubt ; and now, Mr. Lobb, to make an end of a perhaps tedious story, am I to have your assistance in the effort I am anxious to make to get back the money Mrs. Polding has been swindled out of, and a portion, at least, of the ten thousand pounds of which you have been eased by Winthrop and Company ?”

Certainly : Mr. Lobb would place himself in my hands !

“ All right ! This, then, is how we will shape it. You will see Antony Warren to-morrow morning ?”

“ Yes ! no doubt of that. I have an appointment with him.”

"Of course you have ! Very well. Two cousins of yours—John and Thomas Beadon—you knew John and Thomas Beadon ?"

"Of course I did. They went off to Australia."

"Just so ; and are just returned with no end of gold dust."

"Dear me ! I am so glad."

"So am I. Well, now, just listen. You must inform your friend Warren of that, to him, very important fact, and hint that it might not be undesirable to have John and Thomas Beadon present to-morrow evening. You may put it how you please. You are safe to win back all, or nearly all of your losses, of course. Mr. Antony Warren has assured you of that a hundred times ; and possibly, you know, they may recoup themselves for the sums regained by you—sure to be regained, we well understand that—by a clever dive into the Australian diggings."

"I think I understand—but——"

"You *must* understand, Mr. Lobb, thus far. That either you are a pauper the day after to-morrow—or that you confer on me the means of being

quietly present at the projected sheep—(very silly sheep)—shearing to-morrow evening. You must excuse my frankness.”

“I will give you the password. It is ‘Uncle Tom’s Cabin.’”

“Good! Another item! Play very high. Stake all you possess. Of course they must produce corresponding sums. Myself and friend, when you are settled with—but don’t let that alarm you, shall play tremendously high, too. You must hint that to Warren and Co.—they will come prepared. So shall we; and now, Good-bye. Stick to the text I have written out for you, Mr. Lobb, or you are a ruined man. Be steadfast, and you may go back to Somersetshire rejoicing; and the sooner you *do* go back, take my word for it, the better. This world of London is a dangerous place for ingenuous youths like you.”

“I should like to make one in the game to-morrow evening!” said Mr. Ernest Sherry—“very much like to make one.”

“Well, you look like one that I should like well enough with me when there was rough work going

on. But better not. You, your brother, and Mr. Turle have never been, I am pretty sure, in a gaming house since you were born. The matter will, in all probability, come before a Police Court—be published in newspapers. It will be better, therefore, that your names should not in any way be mixed up therewith. Again, ‘Good-bye!’ Be firm, Mr. Lobb—trust implicitly in Clarke, the Detective Officer, and all will be well; as we know by a great authority, that “all’s well that ends well!”

I knocked, as instructed by Mr. Lobb, four times at the door of the house in Jermyn-street. First, rat-tat! the postman’s knock; next, a single tap; then the furious *tintimarre* of a full-plush flunkey attendant upon a countess; concluding with the modest double knock of a gentleman.

The door was immediately opened as far as the tether of chain permitted. Our cards were presented. “Very well,” said the porter, first glancing at them by a lamp he held in his hand. “Very well; I shall say you have called.”

“Uncle Tom’s Cabin.”

"All right, gentlemen. You are expected, I know; but we must be cautious. The infernal detectives try on so many dodges."

"So I have heard. They ought to be strangled, every mother's son of them."

"Right you are, and I should like to pull the cord. Wouldn't I——. The first floor, gentlemen. Door on the left."

A very pleasant party—pleasant people. One of them Mr. Winthrop, *alias* Jameson, with respect to whose identity there could be no possible doubt. Dear me, with what flattering condescendence he welcomed in Messrs. John and Thomas Beadon—two of the most recent gold importations from Australia. Really, if we had been his own brothers, returned home after a long expatriation, he could not have been more cordial, overflowing—or, as the French say, effusive.

It is very fascinating, that high play. Those rolls of bank-notes, heaps of gold; vast sums, the possession of which depends often upon the

mere turning of a card, strongly excite one. It did me, at all events, upon that particular occasion.

It was quite two o'clock in the morning when Mr. Martin Lobb was finished with. He played with Antony (Alice Gray) Warren, Esquire, and though he was permitted to occasionally win—continuous, unbroken success would be a stupid blunder—the end was that Mr. Martin Lobb was stripped to his skin. Several times he looked at me—and I wished him further for doing so—as if doubtfully expectant that I should in some miraculous way arrest his descent into the black gulf of ruin down which he felt himself to be else hopelessly falling. I gave no sign—not likely; and I fancied he had some doubt as to whether I was or was not confederate with the plunderers.

“That gentleman,” said I, when the silly fool had been completely cleaned out; “that gentleman, Mr. Dod——”

“Mr. Lobb!”

“Well, Lobb or Dod, it comes to the same thing. The gentleman has had a run of ill-luck. But ill-luck turns as suddenly as it sets in. I and

my friend here should like to take a turn. Only we cannot stop beyond about six o'clock. The *Star of the South* will lift anchor at Gravesend at ten. She dropped down the river yesterday. So let us have a game or two for something worth winning."

"With all my heart," said Winthrop. "You Australian gentlemen ought to have plenty of gold-dust. But—excuse me, I mean nothing personal to you — they sometimes trade (I mean in the betting, playing line) upon that reputation. I never toss with gentlemen whose game is—heads I win; tails you lose. Name your stakes; post them, and my friend and I will cover them, never fear."

I took out of my breast pocket a thick roll of Bank of England notes. Only the outside ones, it is true, were genuine flimsies; but if all had been the real thing, I should have placed a decent fortune upon the table.

"Now then, Mister What's-your-name, show your tin. We will post stakes, and play at any game you like for the entire lot. We've been

drinking a little too fast ; but it will be strange, for all that, if a couple of cockneys can come over us."

"Perhaps not ; but we'll have a shy. Warren, shell out what you have got. Ah ! Well, here's a pretty good sum. Cover it, and then we'll settle how we shall play. Unlimited loo you perhaps would like !"

"Yes ; unlimited loo. Any one can play at that."

"And here, Frank Jameson, is my trump card," added I, producing a pistol. "No nonsense. The first letter of my name is Clarke, the detective. I have detected you, at all events. This gentleman is a brother detective. There—there—it's of no use to bluster and stamp. We impound all this money. Two thousand three hundred go to the Widow Polding of Exeter ; the rest to this plundered greenhorn, Mr. Lobb."

"Damnation !" screamed Jameson. "What the devil ! Am I dreaming ?"

"Oh dear, no. You are known to be one of the most wide-awake gentlemen alive. Be cool, my fine fellow. Tragedy is mere farce when played by

such gentlemen as you and your friend Warren—whose real name by the way is Bamford, Cornelius Bamford, before me.

“To speak very seriously, Mr. Frank Jameson, a very wise discretion has been allowed me in this matter, the circumstances being peculiar. If you agree, under your own hand, to reimburse the Widow Polding, and give me legal power to otherwise distribute this heap of money, in equitable proportion amongst those whose substance you have devoured, you may for the present escape a sentence of penal servitude for life. I don’t think—thanks to your hope of clearing out the rich Australians—there are very many sovereigns and notes of the Governor and Company of the Bank of England to be found at your lodgings.”

“I’d see you——first!” foamed Jameson, who was perfectly beside himself with rage; and no wonder. Warren, pale as paper, and trembling in every limb, said nothing. “I’d see you——first. Give us our money. Keep what we’ve won of this fool Lobb to-night, if you like; though that’s a robbery.”

“That is your final decision. Very well. Now Benson, the handcuffs ! Quick ! The gentleman is becoming violent. No nonsense, now. There. Not the first time, I warrant, that your hands have been locked together prayer-fashion. Your friend sets you an example : submits quietly as a lamb. Now let’s be off.”

The reader will have understood that this was to a great extent, though not altogether, *bounce*. Such things are often done by the Detective Police ; but, I need hardly say, could never be tried on except when they are dealing with notorious rascals.

The treatment was perfectly effective with our two handcuffed friends. After a few minutes’ survey of the situation, recognising the certainty that under no circumstances would he ever get possession of the impounded money—and there being, I felt morally sure, more than one black business which might come to light were he and his friend subjected to the scrutiny of a Police Court, gibbeted in newspapers—Mr. Jameson struck.

“Well,” said he, with a savage scowl, “what

must be, must be. I will give up the money; sign what you like. Warren will do the same."

"All right. How true it is that 'discretion is the better part of valour.'"

Some caution was required in settling the affair; but it was at last satisfactorily arranged, at about ten in the morning, in Mr. Phelps the attorney's office—upon emerging from which, Frank Jameson did me the honour to say, I was the most infernal thief that ever stepped in shoe-leather, and he only wished——

"That you may some day be able to do Clarke as brown, as uncommonly brown, as he has done you. Well, it's a natural, if not altogether a pious aspiration; and if you don't die till it's fulfilled, it's my opinion you'll live to a fine patriarchal old age. Good-bye, Jameson: Farewell, Warren. We have passed an unusually pleasant evening together—very. And I have no doubt the evening's amusement will bear the morning's reflection. There, don't look thunder and lightning. There's a milk shop close by, kept by a widow. Farewell again. The best of friends must part."

ANTONY WARREN, ESQUIRE.

I HAVE already stated that the name of Antony Warren, Esq., of Barnsbury Park, Islington, was strongly underlined in the book of Private Instructions to Detective Officers kept at Scotland Yard, and that I had been marked out for the duty of attending in a double sense to that gentleman's incomings and outgoings. The incidents related in "One Night in a Gaming-House," as officially reported by me, caused that notice, if I may so express myself, to be doubly underlined. Could it be really true that a gentleman who frequented "Harmonic Meetings" at taverns to hear himself sing "Alice Gray" and "Banks of Allan Water," could be not only a gamester upon an extensive scale when a fat pigeon was to be plucked—there was nothing surprising in that—but Chairman, Director, Committee of Direction, Secretary, and

Treasurer of the Sahara Railway Company, expected to pay, in next to no time, twenty per cent. interest on a capital of two hundred thousand pounds, in shares of three pounds each, receivable by instalments; the King of Monboddo having graciously granted the concession under his own royal hand and seal? The African Sahara being a dead level throughout there would be no tunnels, deep cuttings, gradients, to swallow up the shareholders' money, &c. &c. Was he also the projector, president, and joint-gérant with Monsieur Ilfautvivre of the Submarine Tunnel connecting Dover and Calais, to be carried along upon the summits of primary rocks, to be had for asking at Terra del Fuego, Cape Horn, and to be sunk, when shipped and brought over to the Manche, at regular distances of two hundred kilometres; a project favourably reported upon by the "Ponts et Chaussées" of France, and heartily commended by the great French Emperor: Capital, five millions sterling, in two-pound shares, in order to interest the peoples of the two great western nations in a magnificent undertaking destined to

render indissoluble the moral tie which united them by a material, indestructible link of granite and iron. There were other companies of not quite such splendid promise and proportions of which he was suspected to be the Corporation Sole; by one of which minor fry—a company organized for the purpose of reconverting sawdust into deal and mahogany boards—he had, it was hoped, incautiously brought himself within the provisions of the statutes applicable to obtaining money under false pretences.

I was, if possible, to catch this slippery eel, but the difficulty was to discover with what bait he might be successfully hooked. He was not to be had by letters addressed to Wentworth Fitzstephen, Esquire, Director of the “Sahara,” requesting a personal interview, the applicant being desirous of investing a large sum therein, but required information upon some of the minor points, which he should be glad to receive from the Chairman-Director himself. The reply was ever a printed prospectus, and perhaps a few lines, signed by a clerk, stating that he was directed to enclose pro-

spectuses, and that any further information required would be forwarded in writing by himself, the clerk. It was a rule of the company which could not be departed from—not to grant personal interviews with applicants for shares, such verbal intercourse often leading to misconceptions which it was desirable to avoid.

I could never discover whether this multifarious Corporation Sole was ever present in the person at either of the places where money for the purchase of shares could be received by letter or otherwise, and a receipt in due course given for the same.

Of course it was not difficult to discover that the clerks who received the letters and answered them were frequent visitors at Barnsbury Park. But that proved nothing. There were three of them—poor devils—whose salaries, small as they might be, could not be jeopardized by indiscreet disclosures. But that proved nothing as to the identity of Antony Warren, Esq., Wentworth Fitzstephen, Esq., Marmaduke Neville, Esq., and Reginald Herbert, Esq. There was the rub.

I did not expect that those conglomerate gentlemen's enterprises were wonderfully great successes in the swindling line. Perhaps a cool thousand a year, after paying rent of offices, salaries of clerks, advertisements, printing, and other incidental costs, might be realized ; not more, quite probably not so much. The business management was in a legal sense admirably managed, the advising lawyer must have been a knowing one in the art of steering a crazy barque through the rocks, shallows, quicksands of Acts of Parliament. There was nothing which fell legitimately within police cognizance, except it might be some transactions arising out of the sawdust and deal-boards' scheme, and to the hundreds of small sufferers—with not many exceptions his dupes were foolish people who had saved up a few pounds, and hoped to become capitalists after a few years by Sahara and sawdust investments—the only advice we could give was that they had better apply to an attorney: about as valuable counsel in ninety-nine out of a hundred cases, as recommending a hungry man without a spare shilling in his pocket to go and dine

at the London Tavern. The attorneys, at that stage of the swindle, if heavily fee'd, could have done little or nothing. No doubt by and by the pear would be rotten ripe, but when that day came round, or was dawning, where would Messrs. Wentworth, Fitzstephen, Herbert, be found? They would have taken the wings of the morning and flown to one of the Alsatias of the world—there are more Alsatias than I should care to enumerate—in which case the crowd of small-fry creditors might go whistle.

Such a scheme of scoundrelism, however cleverly concocted, is pretty sure to break down somewhere. It may be drawn up by the astutest of attorneys, settled, in A and B cases, of course, by ablest counsel, but a fatal flaw will somehow or other show itself when and where it is least expected. It so fell out in the case of Mr. Antony Warren.

Of course, although the facts of this narrative are as near as possible literally correct, the title I have given to the Bubble Companies concocted by the Barnsbury Park gentlemen are fictitious. I mean them only as generic designations of some of the

vilest systematizations of fraud that ever disgraced a Christian country. Another name applicable to them in favourable seasons, when the mania of speculation seizes upon the commercial classes, is Legion. There are no mushrooms, none of the gourd tribe which spring up, expand, and perish as do the funguses which suddenly appear and sun themselves for their brief day in the atmosphere of the Money Market.

Antony Warren, Esquire, was destined to be brought to grief by a very mean missile hurled by a very feeble hand, resembling in a small way the grandiose stuff which I have somewhere read of the death of Charles XII. of Sweden. "A petty fortress and a humble hand," is, I think, one of the lines.

A young gentleman of, we will say, the name of Jenneson, a native, I suppose, of the south of England—far north he never could have been, at all events after cutting his eye-teeth—was a fanatic in the cause of science. Analytical Chemical Science—it was *the* motive power—the embodied Eureka—would be the regenerator of the world! He once

wrote a paper, read in the Social Science Congress, demonstrating the wastefulness of peeling potatoes previous to boiling, or sending them as they do in Ireland to table in their jackets. In the one case, however careful the operator, much of the valuable part of the esculent was necessarily severed with the skin, and consequently lost. In the other, as everybody knew, the mealiest portion of the potato adhered to the skin, and was equally lost to human nutrition. The true mode to cleanse potatoes was to place them in a tub filled with water, and well scrub them, the best instrument, he believed, for the purpose being a birch broom. Great applause. Mr. Jenneson's paper ordered to be printed. Now, I don't even think this anecdote is literally true, though I know men who would go before a magistrate and make oath of its verity. I dare say there is a substratum of truth in the statement. He wrote, I dare say, some pompous nonsense, which was read in the Congress, and in consequence expanded into a full-blown philosopher.

Mr. Jenneson, apart from science, was by no

means a fool, though candour obliges me to admit that in one characteristic of the donkey tribe, obstinacy, he was supereminent, which was very unfortunate for the three gentlemen rolled into one, who are the heroes of this paper. Mr. Jenneson—Mr. Edward Jenneson, I think—was a draper's assistant, and had *not* a soul above sarsnet, calico, or buttons. He knew on which side, business or philosophy, the world's bread is buttered. He had finished his time, was an expert in his vocation, and ardently desired to establish himself as a general haberdasher and linendraper in his native town. The sequel to which achievement would be his marriage with Miss Emily Rowden. There was but one obstacle—one that it would require many tedious years to surmount. To set up in business, with a fair chance of making it a successful business, a capital of one thousand pounds was required. Mr. Edward Jenneson, who had been an orphan for more years than he could recollect, had but six hundred pounds, all told. Though a philosopher he was not a Platonist, and the notion of waiting a dozen years or so, before it

would not be insanity to wed Miss Rowden, was insupportable, distracting !

He was in that state of mind when the flaming prospectuses of the Sawdust reconstituted Deal and Mahogany Boards' Scheme, promising almost fabulous pecuniary advantages, met his eye and fixed it. He could see nothing absurd in such a proposal. The particles of dust were the constituent parts of the board, temporarily disintegrated, &c. &c. The philosophy of the thing was plain to the meanest capacity. Let fools laugh. The discoveries and application of steam, of gas, of electricity, were once laughed at. Mr. Edward Jenneson was quite struck with the idea. It opened up a vista, in which the draper and haberdasher's shop figured, but at the threshold, as it were, of a prospect disclosing much more splendid objects than even that, for the moment, highly desirable object of ambition. He would communicate at once with the representative of the company. He did so ; received a courteous answer ; a lengthened correspondence ensued ; the end of which was that the Chairman-Director appointed an interview with

the possessor of six hundred pounds, just then most particularly wanted by Mr. Antony Warren. Mr. Edward Jenneson came special to London for the all-important interview, and met Mr. Herbert at Peele's Coffee-House, Fleet-street. The conference was a lengthened one. When it really comes to the point of positively paying over five or six hundred pounds in hard cash for a heap of small oblong bits of paper, which—however immense may be their prospective—are of not the slightest present value, fears and doubtings shake the soul, however ingenuous that soul may be, of the individual about to part "it would be for months, it might be for ever," with such a lot of genuine money. This appears to have been emphatically the case with Edward Jenneson. The explanations required were given with abundant fulness. Nothing could be more assuring. Myrrh and manna glided from those "Alice Gray" lips. Like the Princess in the fairy tale, Mr. Herbert seemed to drop pearls and diamonds every time he opened his mouth.

True, quite true; but Mr. Edward Jenneson was a practical man. His favourite philosophy was

that which teaches by examples. The idea that if he parted with his precious capital, the haberdasher's shop and Miss Rowden might, by the remotest possibility, become a dissolving view—was frightful, harrowing. Now, could Mr. Herbert show him, in strict confidence, of course, a specimen—a piece of deal-board which had actually been made out of sawdust. Mr. Herbert reflected. It was at the time, as I afterwards knew, a matter almost of life and death to him to clutch that six hundred pounds, and he was too keen an observer of human character not to see that having once propounded so very reasonable a request, you might as well by expostulation induce a pig in London streets to keep in the way he should go, as expect Mr. Edward Jenneson to hand over the cash till he had with his own bodily eyes seen a specimen of the wonderful manufacture.

Mr. Herbert consequently and graciously relaxed the rigid regulations of the company for the second time. He would show him, in a few hours, a specimen of the manufacture, at the same time warning him that the process was not quite com-

plete. There were certain roughnesses—irregularities upon the surface of the sawdust planks, which, though not precisely a defect as to saleable value, were unsightly, and would, no question, be remedied. This was quite satisfactory to our practical philosopher. He knew that no great invention was at first perfect, worked quite smoothly, and was prepared to make any allowance for such trifling shortcomings, which there could be no doubt, as Mr. Herbert said, would be speedily remedied. The result was the exchange of five hundred pounds in Bank of England notes, for some printed scraps of paper and a piece of deal-board about three feet long, and of somewhat peculiar surface. Mr. Herbert discharged some rather peculiar obligations, pressing upon him at the time, with the notes, and Mr. Edward Jenneson, having carefully locked up his deal-nugget—it was not to be shown to the general public on any account—waited with a radiant countenance upon his beloved *fiancée*, and assured her that the business and the wedding would be, before long, two accomplished delightful facts; hinting at, at the same time, that far greater

glories in the business line would not make themselves long waited for.

Should any reader imagine that human credulity has a limit which such an audacious swindle would overstep, I beg to refer him to the case of *Westaway versus Gilpin*, tried at a western spring assize in 1849, when facts precisely similar to those I have just related were deposed to on oath; and the jury gave a verdict for the simpleton tricked out of his money.

More than a year passed away; nothing was heard of the sawdust scheme; nothing of Mr. Herbert, except that at Christmas, Edward Jennesson received a box of prunes (fact!) with Mr. Herbert's compliments. The prunes were part of a first consignment of that valuable fruit to a company formed for the purpose of importing prunes, grapes, &c., upon a gigantic scale. When Jennesson mentioned the circumstance, I really thought he was bamboozling me, the thing seemed so utterly incredible. It was, however, a laughable truth. Precisely the same incident occurred in the case of a General Wine Importing Company, not long

since wound up, with no assets. A young man at Winchester invested one hundred pounds in that company, and in return received a box of prunes as a complimentary Christmas present.

Edward Jenneson became very fidgety, irate. Miss Rowden, too, was incessant in her inquiries as to how and where he had placed out the five hundred pounds, which it was known he had obtained of the executors under his father's will; hinting, with growing distinctness, as days, weeks, months rolled on, that she doubted the wisdom of continuing an engagement with a young man who refused her his confidence even in the days of courtship.

Edward Jenneson was getting desperately savage. How could he tell his beloved that he had invested his precious capital, with the exception of one hundred pounds, in that d——d deal-board? His own faith in it was horribly shaken. The more he contemplated, studied it, the darker grew his misgivings. But that such a fact would presuppose the end of the world—for a globe in which such stupendous wickedness *could* be perpetrated ought to be destroyed by fire, if ever

globe did—he could almost swear that three feet of board had never been sawdust, but had grown in the natural way, as other deal boards did, in a Norwegian forest. He had seen several such “specimens” in timber-yards since : the unevenness of the surface, and all that humbugging stuff, was caused, they said, by the twisting and shrinking of the wood whilst drying. Should it really turn out that that oily-tongued villain had swindled him, the vengeance he would take should be something exemplary—to break the heart of a man, the back of a monster. But he could not, would not believe it. He would write again to “The Board,” requesting, in a strictly categorical form, to know what progress, if any, had been made in realizing the prospectus of the Sawdust Company ; where the works were situated, and how soon it was expected that the Company would commence operations as “Timber Merchants on a Magnificent Scale.”

The answer arrived in due course. Difficulties—unforeseen difficulties—had arisen in the process of conversion. It was fully expected, however,

that they would be ultimately surmounted. In say three years, at the latest, a dividend on the capital subscribed might be hoped for with considerable confidence; though, of course, there were chances of the failure of the most promising enterprise, which must be looked fairly in the face, and must have entered into the calculations of every prudent shareholder when he determined to embark in the speculation; for a speculation, in its widest sense, the project in question certainly was, &c., &c.

Mr. Edward Jenneson assured me, upon his word as a man, that the bare reading of the letter gave him the English cholera—though it was winter time—to such a degree that he was confined to his bed for three weeks, and at one time his life was considered to be in danger. He, however, recovered; but as to whether that was a mercy or the reverse, he had his doubts. He was no sooner declared to be convalescent, than he was knocked over again—smashed (morally) by another letter. He allowed me to take a copy:—

“ 4, Belvidere Terrace.

“ SIR,—A report has been widely circulated, and which papa firmly believes to be correct—although it really seems incredible—that you have given five hundred pounds (nearly the whole of the money to which you were entitled under your father’s will) for a piece of deal-board, a sack of sawdust, and a box of prunes! I don’t quite understand it, but that, it seems to me, is what it amounts to. Five hundred pounds for a piece of deal-board, a sack of sawdust, and a box of prunes! (I remember the prunes, and that they were bad and mouldy.) Anyone capable of such an act of lunacy requires a keeper, not a wife. If, therefore, you cannot refute the report in the only way in which it can be effectually refuted, by laying before papa documentary evidence that you have invested your capital in proper securities, I must decline continuing my acquaintance with a man so utterly incapable of taking care of himself, much less of a wife and family.

Yours, &c.,

“ E. ROWDEN.

"P.S.—I will not give up all hopes—I should be grieved to do so (but the prunes perplex me)—that you will be able to prove the report in question to be a ridiculous hoax. Should that be so, I shall again subscribe myself, yours faithfully, till death,

"E. R."

As soon as poor Jenneson had sufficiently recovered from this second shock, to collect his ideas, and reason upon them, he cast about in his mind to remember who it could be that had set such a damnable report a-going—had sufficient knowledge of the transaction to so travestie, burlesque it! He was not long in hitting upon the delinquent—Tom Rogers. It could only be Tom Rogers, whom, upon the occasion of a birthday banquet, he had partially, perhaps wholly (for he had but a confused remembrance the next morning, he remembered *that*, of what had passed between them towards the small hours of the morning). The treacherous villain! However, it was of no use to swear and go on. The time might come when he should give Tom Rogers a Roland for his Oliver.

Not very likely, it soon appeared. Jenneson not being able to place the required documentary evidence before "Papa," the engagement between the young people was peremptorily put an end to; the young lady being mortifyingly acquiescent in "Papa's" decision. One reason why was not long to seek: Edward Jenneson, who had then fully regained his health, was out for a walk, when he met that villain Tom Rogers and Emily Rowden walking lovingly together arm in arm!

This was the crowning stroke, and Jenneson resolved to leave his native place forthwith, shake the dust off his feet, proceed to London, get his money back from that smooth-seeming scoundrel, Herbert, and be in some way thoroughly revenged upon him. Besides the one hundred pounds remaining of the legacy, he had about seventy pounds of his own savings by him; and one hundred and seventy pounds would go a considerable way in law, and he would expend it to the last farthing in exposing the swindler. (Mr. Edward Jenneson had fully made up his mind by that time that the supposed conversion of sawdust, like thousands of

other conversions, was all flam.) But first, upon reflection he determined to apply to Scotland-yard for the aid of the Detective Police. Their services if obtainable there—would be cheaper, of course, and probably more effective in the way of exposure, at all events, than those of an attorney.

Arrived at Scotland-yard, Mr. Jenneson and his grievances were handed over to me. I was concerned for the young man—laughable, in a certain sense, as was his lugubrious story. (A great deal of what I have related it is necessary to explain was gurgled out, as it were, over a convivial glass, when we were vainly waiting at the Peacock for Antony Warren, Esq., who appeared to have got sick of singing “Alice Gray,” &c., at a most inopportune time.)

“Well, Mr. Jenneson,” said I, “something may turn up—to use a very silly phrase—that may enable you to trounce Herbert. Have you that piece of deal-board?”

“Well, curse it, yes! But what can that avail, except to show what an egregious ass I have been?”

“ I don’t know that that is all it will prove. To obtain money by a simple, naked lie, is not criminally punishable—the simple, naked lie, not being, in the eye of the law, a false pretence within the meaning of the statute. The judges have so decided upon the principle that they cannot be expected to become the guardians, the custodians, of all the simpletons in the kingdom. Pardon me, Mr. Jenneson. I merely speak in a general, impersonal sense. But a lie to which is appended a corroborative circumstance, *is* a false pretence in the eye of the law. Whether a piece of deal-board, pretendedly manufactured out of sawdust, will be held to be a sufficient corroborative circumstance, I cannot say. Judges and juries, I have found, always strain a legal point to convict a person of whose moral guilt no doubt can be entertained. Of course you are aware that you will be terribly laughed at. The whole thing is so absurd—so ludicrous—impossible, I was going to say——”

“ I don’t care about its being impossible !” interrupted Jenneson ; “ it’s true ! and I don’t care one brass farthing if all London—all created men,

women, and children—were laughing at me at the same moment, so that I can be revenged upon the scoundrel who so audaciously diddled me. I'll follow him like his shadow, till I do find an opportunity of tripping his heels up."

"Very well, we'll see what can be done. You are sure you would recognise him if you saw him?"

"Should I recognise myself in a glass? I should know him amongst ten thousand, however disguised."

"And you would not hesitate to give him into custody, at any risk of after-consequences to yourself?"

"Hesitate! It would be the happiest moment of my life. I should like—shouldn't I like—to snap on the handcuffs, chain his legs. Oh!"

"Handcuffs are not generally used in such cases. Well, meet me at the tavern I told you of—the Peacock, near the Angel, Islington, on Thursday evening. Can you blow a good cloud?"

"Certainly I can!"

"I can, also. We will place ourselves in an obscure corner of the room, and with the help of a

screen of smoke shall not be readily recognised by our gentleman, till you are quite sure he is the right man. Should Mr. Antony Warren be, as I believe, your Mr. Herbert, we shall then have him. There will be an exposure at all events, at a Police Office, the circumstances will be ventilated in the newspapers ; and the career of a successful swindler will be cut short, if no other punishment befall him. Good day ! Be punctual !”

As I have stated, Mr. Antony Warren suddenly left off attending the free-and-easy at the Peacock, when his company there was very anxiously desired. As to calling at Barnsbury Park, and asking under a pretence to see Mr. Warren, it was labour thrown away. He was always on the Continent—in the country—anywhere but at home. I grew weary of waiting upon Mr. Warren, having besides matters of graver importance to attend to. Not so, Edward Jenneson. A staunch sleuth hound he, and for full two months he watched night and day—with but few hours’ intermission for absolutely necessary rest—about the house in Barnsbury Park.

Patience and perseverance were at last rewarded. He called at my lodgings one evening when I was out, and drove about in a cab like a madman to find me for a couple of hours. At last we met.

"Thank ~~you~~ ! thank ~~you~~ !" he exclaimed, his not very strong eyes lit into fiery passion by excitement. "I have found the villain at last. He left home in a brougham, and is now with a number of his acquaintances at the Mitre Tavern, De Beauvoir Town. They have a supper there. Come, do not let us lose one precious minute !"

"You are sure the man you saw leave the house in Barnsbury Park is your friend Herbert?"

"Positive? Sure as I am of my own life !"

"All right ; have with you then !"

We were quite in time. Antony Warren, Esquire, was secured and taken off to a lock-up. Jameson was also present ; and I saw looks of intelligence exchanged between the worthy pair. The charge of obtaining five hundred pounds by false pretences was regularly taken, and signed by Edward Jenneson.

The next day Antony Warren, Esquire, was taken before the magistrate at Worship-street: but no Edward Jenneson put in an appearance. The matter had no doubt been "squared;" probably by Jameson: and Jenneson having got his money, was perfectly satisfied with the result. We, however, asked for a remand, which, after some demur, was granted, and the upshot was, such an exposure was made that the swindling concerns conducted by Warren were broken up a wholesale system of fraud blown to the winds—that particular ramification of it, I should say; the system itself being immortal, and flourishing at this day with renewed vigour, in multitudes of forms.

I did not again hear of Edward Jenneson, and cannot therefore say whether he did or did not return to his native town, and, with the help of his recovered five hundred pounds, cut out Tom Rogers. Very likely.

I had not, however, seen the last of Antony Warren, Esq. He had been obliged to leave Barnsbury Park, and though small gambling sustained him for a time in outwardly decent circum-

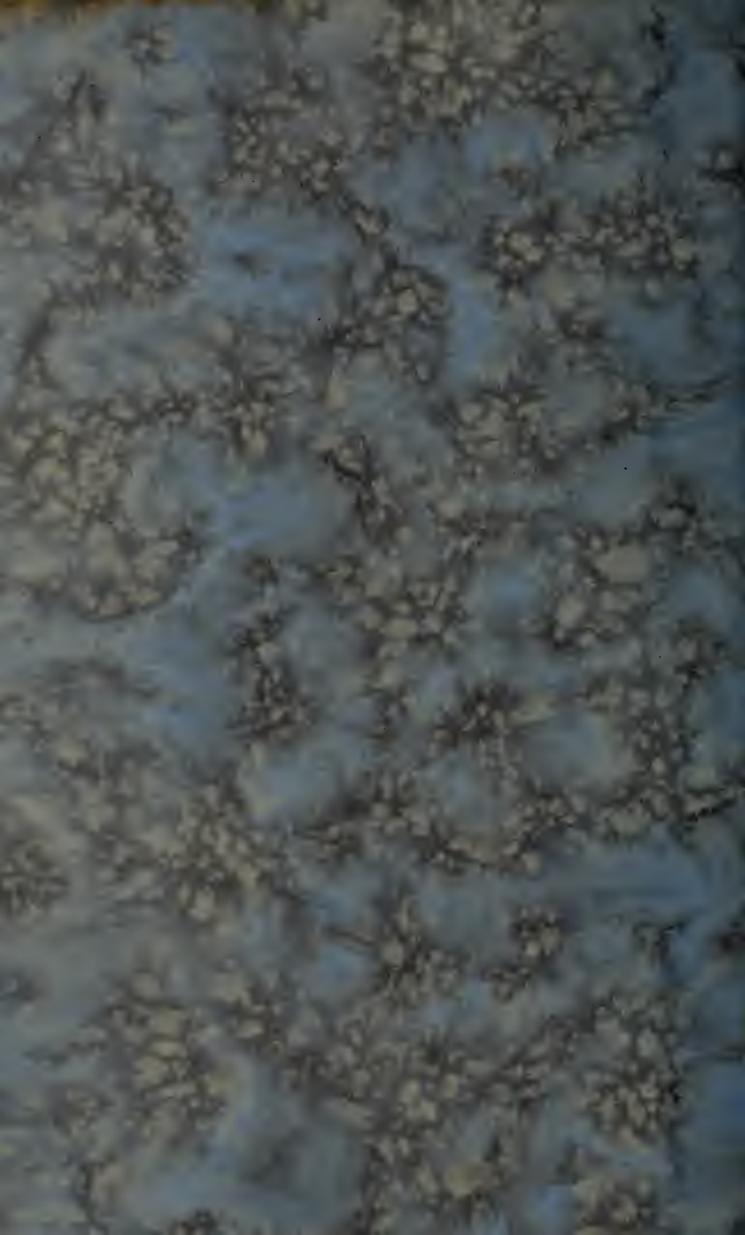
stances, he gradually sank lower and lower even in the swindlers' "social scale," and at last fell into the black gulf of recognised felony, which lies at the foot of all such downward careers of life. By means of a false character, furnished by one of his former and still floating pals, he obtained a situation as clerk in a city merchant's house. The salary was a low one, but Warren having neither wife nor children, might have regained respectability and comfort but for his unconquerable craving for unhealthy excitement—the excitement of betting and gambling. In one of the "emergencies" sure to occur in such pursuits, Mr. Warren borrowed about thirty pounds of his employer's money, which he had received as town collecting clerk. Of course he fully intended to return it, that is always so in the case of a first felony, directly a slice of luck should put it in his power to do so. That slice of luck did not come to him in time. The fraud was discovered : and Antony Warren, alias Bamford, under which real name he was recognised—having pleaded guilty—and it being his first proved offence, he was summarily convicted by the Lord Mayor, and sen-

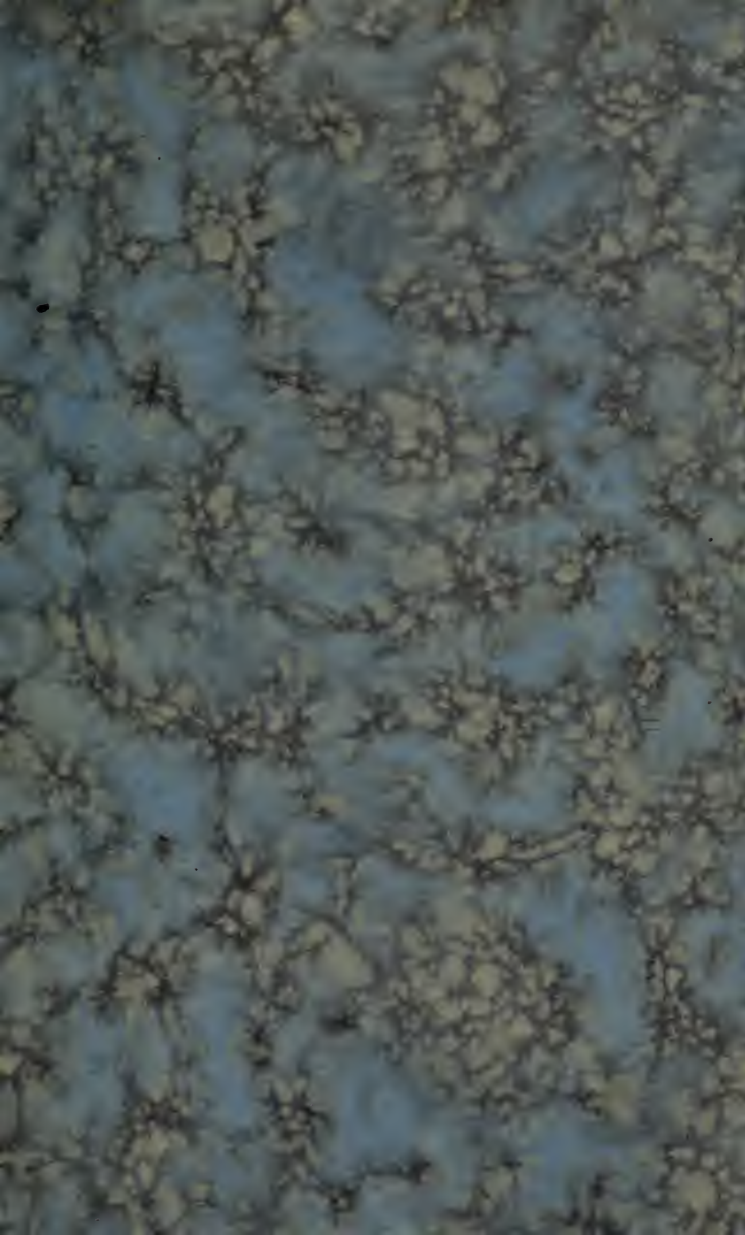
tenced to three months' imprisonment with hard labour. Liberated from prison at the expiration of his sentence, unable with a blasted character to obtain employment, he had recourse to the desperate expedient of forging a cheque, in the name of the City firm by whom he had been employed, upon the Union Bank of London. He was an excellent penman, and had by him more than one specimen of the firm's signature. He had also, with prevision, it may fairly be presumed, of one day finding occasion for their use—purloined previous to the discovery of the thirty pounds' fraud—several printed cheques from his employer's cheque book. The first cheque for fifty-five pounds odd, which he got a waiter at His Lordship's Larder, Cheapside, to change for him, was successful. The second, for a larger sum, which he had the audacity to present himself, settled him for life. He was arrested, sent to trial, convicted and sentenced to penal servitude for twenty years. I myself saw him at Portland. Jennings, as it chanced, was in the same gang.

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